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News Tracker ... What's new with old news

States

Spacecraft prize: The SpaceShipOne craft that cracked the barrier to manned commercial space flight will be launched in September in a bid to win the \$10 million Ansari X Prize, pioneering aviation designer Burt Rutan announced Tuesday.

The prize is being offered for the first privately developed, three-seat spacecraft to soar beyond an altitude of 62 miles and repeat the feat within two weeks.

SpaceShipOne flew to that altitude in a test flight last month from Mojave, Calif. Rutan said he plans a qualifying launch on Sept. 29 followed by the second flight as early as Oct. 4.

Laci Peterson trial: Jurors in the Scott Peterson murder trial listened to the defendant's small aluminum fishing boat, then heard an expert testify that a lifeless body could have been thrown overboard.

The testimony Tuesday was intended by prosecutors to counter claims by the defense that Peterson could not have heaved the 153-pound body of his eight-month-pregnant wife, Laci, into San Francisco Bay without the boat tipping over.

Prosecutors allege Peterson killed his wife in their Modesto, Calif., home, drove to the bay with the body in a tool box, ferried it onto the open water and dumped it.

Courtney Love's first trial: Rock musician Courtney Love was sentenced in Los Angeles on Tuesday to 18 months in drug rehabilitation, closing one chapter in a troubled saga that began when she was accused of trying to break into her ex-boyfriend's home while high on cocaine.

Superior Court Judge Patricia M. Schnegg gave the rocker until Oct. 29 to enroll in a drug counseling program, which will require frequent drug testing. She will be permitted to travel, but will be barred from taking non-prescription drugs, drinking alcohol or being in places that serve alcohol.

World

Philippines withdrawal from Iraq: The Philippines angrily summoned the Australian ambassador Wednesday, saying it objected to criticism that a concession to Iraqi insurgents to save the life of a Filipino captive has encouraged terrorism.

Ambassador Ruth Pearce was called in after Australian Foreign Secretary Alexander Downer blamed the Philippines and



JASON T. POPLIN/Courtesy of the U.S. Navy

Summer Pulse: Petty Officer 3rd Class Desmond Nelson uses a lathe to carve grooves into a piece of stainless steel in the USS Kitty Hawk's machine shop. An asset to the entire strike group, the machine shop can fabricate parts and materials otherwise difficult to obtain while at sea. The Kitty Hawk Strike Group is one of seven carrier strike groups participating in Summer Pulse 2004. The Kitty Hawk operates from Yokosuka Naval Base, Japan.

Spain for a new threat against Australia by a purported al-Qaida affiliate.

Downer said terrorists had been energized by the Philippines' early withdrawal of troops from Iraq to save hostage Angelo dela Cruz from being beheaded, and by Spain's pull-out after the Madrid train bombings in March.

Bali bombings charges: Indonesian police on Wednesday dropped plans to charge militant cleric Abu Bakar Bashir with involvement in the 2002 Bali bombings following a court ruling last week that curbed the use of a false-anti terror law.

Detective Chief Surejno Landung, however, said officers still planned to charge Bashir with heading Jemaah Islamiyah, the al-Qaida linked terror group blamed for the Bali bombings that killed 202 people.

Sudan sanctions: Egypt said Wednesday it would try to prevent adoption of an American-drafted resolution threatening U.N. sanctions on Sudan, aiming to temper inter-

national pressure on its neighbor over bloodshed in its western provinces.

With talk of international sanctions and military intervention growing, Egyptian Foreign Minister Ahmed Aboul Gheit said Sudan needs more time to fulfill its promises to disarm militias and restore order.

Visiting Secretary of State Colin Powell said there wasn't much time to spare. "These people are in desperate need," he said.

Iran's nuclear program: Defying international concerns, Iran has resumed clandestine work linked to uranium enrichment, testing equipment and producing a gas that can be used to make nuclear warheads, diplomats said Wednesday.

The diplomats told The Associated Press that Tehran has restarted equipment used to make uranium hexafluoride gas, which, when injected into centrifuges and spun, can be enriched to a level high enough to make the weapons.

Stories from wire reports

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Erratic typhoon spares Tokyo — for now

BY VINCE LITTLE

Stars and Stripes

YOKOTA AIR BASE, Japan — Typhoon Namtheun turned away from Tokyo on Wednesday and was expected to take a westerly track that would carry it toward Iwakuni this weekend, forecasters said.

U.S. military bases on the Kanto Plain were placed in Tropical Cyclone Condition of Readiness SW (Storm Watch) on Wednesday, said 2nd Lt. Robert Branham, a weather officer for the 374th Operations Support Squadron.

While destructive winds no longer were predicted for the area, officials were monitoring the storm due to its erratic movements and close proximity.

Namtheun now taking aim at Iwakuni

"It could still take a turn to the north, which would bring stronger winds to the area," Branham said Wednesday afternoon.

In TCOR-SW, a possibility remains of danger due to storm unpredictability.

At 3 p.m. Wednesday, Namtheun, Laotian for "River," was 300 miles southeast of Tokyo, moving west-northwest at about 12 mph, according to Branham. The storm packed sustained winds of 104 mph, gusting to about 127.

Following a west-northwesterly path, it was expected to make landfall near Shikoku, Branham said.

Namtheun should weaken a bit by Thursday afternoon, said Staff Sgt. Ronald Sherard, a forecaster with the 374th Operational Support Squadron.

Predicted to be moving due west then at about 15 mph, it's expected to pass 263 miles southwest of Atsugi Naval Air Facility and Camp Zama with sustained winds of 92 mph and gusts up to 115.

By Friday, the storm is expected to be about 124 miles southeast of Shiono Cape in Wakayama Prefecture and off the shores of Shikoku in the western part of Japan, where it should make landfall, ac-

cording to a Japan Meteorological Agency news release.

The current forecast model puts the storm about 37 miles from Iwakuni Marine Corps Air Station by 5 p.m. Sunday, Sherard said.

Officials anticipated minimal impact on the Kanto Plain, Branham said, with the potential for up to two inches of rain beginning late Wednesday and wind gusts topping out at about 40 mph overnight.

Namtheun is the third typhoon to threaten the Kanto Plain this year, he added. On average, two pass within 125 miles of Yokota each year.

Hana Kusumoto contributed to this report.
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Drumming up good relations



MATTHEW SCHWARZ/Courtesy U.S. Navy

Adam Wolf, left, Jessica Weathers, center, Joseph Delacruz, right, and the rest of the Atsugi Naval Air Facility Taiko Drum Team perform at the Kamiseya Naval Support Facility Bon Odori festival on July 25. The festival has fostered positive relations between Kamiseya and Japan for more than 40 years. Atsugi opens its gates for another American Festival Bon Odori on Saturday on Reid Field. The American Festival will be held in the afternoon; the Bon Odori begins in the early evening.

Stripes employee investigated in theft

BY JULIANA GITTLER

Stars and Stripes

HARDY BARRACKS, Japan — Japanese and U.S. officials are investigating a Stars and Stripes employee on suspicion of theft, officials said Tuesday.

The Tokyo District Public Prosecutors Office confirmed Tues-

day that they received the case of Gary Feller, 54, civilian manager of the commercial print shop at Stars and Stripes in Tokyo.

Japanese police detained Feller on July 21, according to Stripes General Manager John Panasiwicz.

No formal charges have been filed and Feller remains in Japanese custody, officials said. Feller came to Stripes from the States in February and lives at Hardy Barracks, next door to the Stars and Stripes office at the Akasaka Press Center. On Tuesday military police investigators from Camp Zama searched Feller's room and questioned residents.

Panasiwicz said it does not appear that other Stars and Stripes employees were involved and government property was not stolen. He added that Stripes is fully cooperating with Japanese police.

Officials at U.S. Forces Japan said they are aware of the case and are looking into it.

Under the Status of Forces Agreement, Japanese authorities can detain U.S. personnel accused of crimes off base in Japan until the case is resolved. Authorities can wait up to 23 days before formally charging a suspect.

Hana Kusumoto contributed to this report.
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USS McCain sailor convicted of forcibly sodomizing shipmate

BY NANCY MONTGOMERY

Stars and Stripes

YOKOSUKA NAVAL BASE, Japan — A sailor assigned to the USS John S. McCain was found guilty Wednesday of the forcible sodomy of another sailor after a drunken night on liberty in Australia.

Military Judge Cmdr. John Maksym found Seaman Fonzy Knight guilty after a day of testimony from the victim, a former friend of Knight's, and others at Knight's court-martial in Yokosuka's base courtroom.

Knight, who's in his early 20s and has been in the Navy for about two years, was to be sentenced Thursday. The maximum penalty is life in prison.

Knight, a storekeeper on the ship, claimed that the oral sex he'd started to perform on a petty officer first class in the petty officer's room April 26, in a Darwin, Australia, Holiday Inn, had been consensual. But the petty officer said it was not and that he'd been horrified to awaken to find Knight engaging in the sex act.

According to military law, force is inherent in any sex assault in which the victim is asleep and cannot give consent and penetration occurs. In the military, consensual sodomy also is a crime but with a maximum penalty of five years' confinement.

Prosecutor Lt. Joseph Judkins argued that the petty officer, a married man of 33, was asleep or unconscious after hours of drinking — in essence, too intoxicated and sleepy to give consent.

Defense lawyer Lt. Catherine McFarland, on the other hand, argued that the petty officer was just drunk enough to engage in a fling or one-night stand. He was not asleep, she said, but able to talk and move, and did consent.

Then he changed his mind, she argued, and at that point he intentionally stopped what he was doing.

According to testimony, the two men had been friends, with the petty officer inviting the younger seaman to his home for dinner and offering an ear for Knight to discuss his personal problems. Knight had disclosed to him that he was experiencing sexual issues, was attracted to men and thought he was gay, according to statements in the case.

The incident occurred after the petty officer returned from drinking at a club the night of the assault — drinking far more than usual, according to testimony. The next day, the petty officer told another sailor that there had been an incident with Knight. He did not disclose details, but, the sailor testified, the petty officer was crying and clearly upset.

Subsequently, ship authorities were informed; on May 21, Knight was charged with forcible sodomy. According to attorneys, Knight told investigators that the petty officer had been asleep. He also said that the petty officer had responded to him after he'd gotten in bed. But the petty officer denied doing so.

The petty officer, in testimony Wednesday afternoon, said he'd had a difficult time dealing with what had happened, that he felt uncomfortable on board the ship now and even had lost some of his work ethic.

"I couldn't look people in the face," he said. "I felt everybody was against me. I felt that I was alone and that everybody else thought it was just a joke."

He said he thinks about that night "almost constantly," wondering why it happened and when, if anything, he might have done to provoke it.

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Correction

A photo caption with a story in Sunday's edition about Army liaison officers in Japan misspelled Mamoru Oba's name.

USS Wilbur docks in Vietnam

By NGHIEM THI XUAN LE

The Associated Press

DANANG, Vietnam — An American warship docked in Vietnam's central port city of Danang on Wednesday, nearly four decades after U.S. Marines splashed ashore here heralding the unofficial start of the Vietnam War.

The arrival of the USS Curtis Wilbur, a guided missile destroyer in the U.S. Seventh Fleet based in Yokosuka, Japan, is only the second American vessel to make a port call in Vietnam since the end of the war.

With four Vietnamese patrol boats acting as guides, the destroyer pulled into Tien Sa port with its flags flying and white-uniformed sailors lining the deck.

Led by Commander John T. Lauer, crew members walked to be greeted with flowers and salutes from a receiving line that included Vietnamese local and military officials.

Scheduled to stay until Monday, Lauer said his crew of 300-plus sailors "is very thrilled

to see Vietnamese people and culture."

U.S. Ambassador Raymond Burghardt said the crew's visit is symbolic of a new era of U.S.-Vietnam ties.

"After 40 years, this is the first U.S. Navy ship to arrive in peace and friendship" in Danang, Burghardt said.

The arrival of the USS Curtis Wilbur was a reminder of the era when the U.S. commitment to the Vietnam War began in earnest.

In March 1965, several hundred U.S. Marines landed at Danang, the first time American combat troops set foot in Vietnam. Until that point, U.S. military personnel, who had been in the country since the 1950s, were only acting as advisers to the South Vietnamese army.

Danang served as a major U.S. military base during the war and the white sands of nearby China Beach became a popular spot for

soldiers on leave.

The Vietnam War ended in April 1975 with the fall of Saigon, the capital of the U.S.-backed South Vietnamese government, to Communist troops.

The two sides have made big strides in the three decades since U.S. forces withdrew from a conflict that claimed the lives of an estimated 3 million Vietnamese and 58,000 Americans.

Since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1995, bilateral ties between the former wartime foes have steadily expanded. A landmark trade agreement in 2001 has led to an explosion in two-way trade, with the United States becoming Vietnam's largest trading partner.

But in the sensitive area of military ties, there has been little progress besides joint work on the search for Americans missing in action during the war.

"After 40 years, this is the first U.S. Navy ship to arrive in peace and friendship in Danang."

U.S. Ambassador
Raymond Burghardt

Misawa kids schooled on skate tricks

By JENNIFER H. SVAN

Stars and Stripes

MISAWA AIR BASE, Japan — Kids with quick feet, little fear and a few scrapes and bruises are hammering the half-pipe here this week — on skateboards.

Skateboard camp is among the free youth camps Pacific Air Forces is sponsoring at PACAF bases this summer. Also included are cheerleading, "all sports" and the Missoula Children's Theater, base officials said.

At Misawa, two professional skateboarders from San Diego are teaching stunts with weird names to 27 kids, ages 10 to 16.

"They all want to learn the kick flip," said instructor Craig Whitehead.

"And stalls and grinds," chipped in 11-year-old Jeff Glover.

Stalls and grinds?

Boards "stall" before dropping back into a ramp, Whitehead explained, and they "grind across the metal bar at the top of the ramp" on the trucks, to which the wheels are attached.

Most of the Misawa campers, appearing less than half the age of their instructors, fearlessly glided up and down half-pipe ramps, some trying to flip their boards with quick feet, a few took a spill, but nothing serious. At Misawa, all skaters are required to wear helmets.

Whitehead said learning to skateboard is about building self-confidence. Practice is important too.

"It's showing them that they have the skills. It just takes practice to learn. You have to do it every day, you know, that's how you get good."

Ashton Dummitt, 11, said he liked learning "tricks that you couldn't do before."

Glover said camp is "just like hanging out with my friends but we're hanging out with (professional) skateboarders. It's just really cool."

Whitehead said he works for an agency that con-



JENNIFER H. SVAN/Stars and Stripes

Ashton Dummitt, 11, crests a half-pipe ramp at Misawa Air Base's skateboard camp on Tuesday. Pacific Air Forces is sponsoring the camp and other youth camps at PACAF bases this summer.

tracts skateboard instructors to Air Force camps around the world. The camp is open to youth ages 10-16, beginner to expert; Misawa's camp is full.

Whitehead and his training partner are to lead a camp at Kadena Air Base, Okinawa, next week.

Yokota Air Base near Tokyo also holds a skateboard camp next week, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Monday through Friday. Sign up in advance at the East Youth Center, call DSN 225-7422 for more information. The camp is limited to the first 20 participants. Campers must bring a skateboard, helmet, knee and elbow pads, a water bottle and towel.

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"Fahrenheit 9/11" filmmaker Michael Moore speaks to the crowd at an event for Campaign for America's Future in Cambridge, Mass., on Tuesday. AAFES says it is trying to get copies of the film overseas.

AAFES still trying to get 'Fahrenheit 9/11'

By PATRICK DICKSON

Stars and Stripes

WASHINGTON — Michael Moore's "Fahrenheit 9/11" might not be playing on overseas bases, but AAFES promised Wednesday it's doing its best to acquire copies of the film.

Spokesman Judd Anstey said that "the status is unchanged" from four weeks ago, when AAFES said that the only factor in getting a movie is its popularity, and that the controversy surrounding "Fahrenheit 9/11" would not affect the decision.

A source at the Navy Motion Picture Service, who wished to remain anonymous, said the Navy had not yet made a decision as to whether to pursue the film for overseas and shipboard showings.

Anstey said that with it being a documentary, there just aren't enough prints to go around at the moment, a sign perhaps that its popularity in the United States might result in even longer waits for servicemembers overseas.

In just over five weeks, the movie has grossed more than \$103 million in the United States and is by far the highest-grossing documentary of all time.

He drew a comparison to Mel Gibson's "The Passion of the Christ," which also had a smaller print run than standard Hollywood fare, but which has grossed \$370 million since February.

"With 'The Passion,' it took us two months to get that into overseas theaters," Anstey said. "We're at five weeks now [that 'Fahrenheit 9/11' has been out]."

For servicemembers venturing off base to see the film, the movie opened last week in South Korean theaters. It is slated to open in Japan in late August.

In Crawford, Texas, where President Bush is vacationing, Moore set up a 9 p.m. showing Wednesday night.

The Crawford Peace House asked Moore for a copy of "Fahrenheit 9/11" when it appeared that no movie theater in the president's home county would show the anti-Bush documentary.

Organizers expected about 1,000 people to attend.

Crawford's police chief, Donnie Tidmore, said some residents of the community 20 miles west of Waco planned to demonstrate against the movie.

"I personally think we're just a little town, and it's kind of an invasion in our small town," said Fran Shelton, whose family owns the Crawford Coffee Station. "Every one's entitled to their opinion, but I'd be happier if he didn't bring it to Crawford."

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

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Yokosuka opening gates for massive friendship festival

Stars and Stripes

Yokosuka Naval Base is hosting one of its largest festivals Sunday, providing food, games and a great place to watch fireworks in conjunction with Yokosuka City's summer festival.

Friendship Day is an annual summer event for which the base opens its gates — well, one gate — to local residents. Most bases have them; Yokosuka's is scheduled in cooperation with the city government to provide a vantage point for the city's fireworks display.

The Mikasa Park gate will open at 10 a.m. and thousands of people are expected to visit food and game booths representing some 60 base organizations. The day provides some base organizations

with their biggest fund-raiser of the year.

Additional offerings include a car show and tours of the USS John McCain.

This is the 28th year the base has held a friendship day; it's one of the year's three biggest festivals, since Leah Dillingham, base recreation director. The other two are in the spring, to celebrate cherry blossoms, and a fall festival with a parade with Mikoshi, portable shrines carried by parade participants. The fireworks are the main event for this festival.

"It's a gorgeous display," Dillingham said.

The gate will close for entry at 8 p.m., she said; visitors will be ushered out starting at about 8:30 p.m., with the gate being closed at 10 p.m.

Suicide car bombing kills 68 in Baghdad



Ingras stand near a vehicle charred after a deadly car bomb went off in Baqouba, Iraq, 35 miles northeast of Baghdad, on Wednesday morning. Iraqis have expressed anger at killings that target fellow citizens.

BY HADI AWAD
The Associated Press

BAQOUBA, Iraq — A suicide car bomb exploded on a busy downtown boulevard in Baqouba on Wednesday, ripping through a commuter bus during morning rush hour, wrecking nearby shops and killing at least 68 Iraqis in one of the deadliest single insurgent attacks since the U.S. invasion.

Dozens of burned bodies were strewn in the street and piled on curbsides, and vehicles, fruit stalls and shops were a bloody tangle of twisted metal from the blast, which targeted Iraqis lined up outside a police recruiting station. Most of the victims were civilians or from among the hundreds of men waiting to join the force.

Meanwhile, a militant group holding two Pakistani contractors hostage said Wednesday it had killed the men, but freed their Iraqi driver, according to the Pan-Arab television station Al-Jazeera.

The group, calling itself the Islamic Army in Iraq, announced in a video Monday that it had kidnapped two Pakistanis working for U.S. forces and had sentenced them to death because their country was discussing sending troops to Iraq.

Elsewhere in Iraq, U.S. and other coalition forces were caught in fierce gunbattles with militants in several areas, including a fight with militants thought to have entered from neighboring Iran.

In Suwayriyah, southeast of the capital, Iraqi forces

backed by U.S. and Ukrainian troops launched a raid hunting for militants who had crossed from the Iranian border, said Polish Maj. Krzysztof Flazak, a coalition spokesman. The raid sparked a battle in which 35 guerrillas and seven Iraqi policemen were killed, 10 Iraqi police were wounded and 40 insurgents were captured.

In Anbar province west of Baghdad, insurgents killed two coalition troops and enemy fire forced two U.S. military aircraft to make emergency landings, the military said. A spokesman from U.S. military headquarters in Baghdad, speaking on condition of anonymity, said U.S. Marines clashed with insurgents in several areas of the province.

It was not immediately clear if the two troops died during the aircraft landings. No details were provided on what type of aircraft that made the landings or where the clashes occurred.

Insurgents launched near simultaneous attacks on several U.S. bases in Ramadi, wounding 10 soldiers, the military said.

Two U.S. soldiers were killed in the past 24 hours. One was killed by a roadside bomb Wednesday in the town of Taji, about 12 miles north of the capital, the military said. Another American was killed by a bomb that struck his Humvee in Balad-Ruz late Tuesday, about 40 miles northwest of Baghdad, according to Army spokesman Master Sgt. Robert Powell.

Associated Press writers Sameer Yacoub and Jamie Tarabay in Baghdad contributed to this report.

Relief agency pulling out of Afghanistan

BY STEPHEN GRAHAM
The Associated Press

KABUL, Afghanistan — The relief agency Medecins Sans Frontieres said Wednesday it was pulling out of Afghanistan, discouraged by a fruitless investigation into the slayings of five of its workers and fearful of new attacks as a bombing targeting election workers left at least two dead.

The Nobel prize-winning group's decision to withdraw was the most dramatic example yet of how deteriorating security has crippled the delivery of badly needed aid and reconstruction in Afghanistan since the Taliban regime was ousted more than two years ago.

MSF had already suspended most of its work after the June killings and recalled all foreign staff to Kabul, the capital.

"Today's context is rendering independent humanitarian aid for the Afghan people all but impossible," the international group said in a statement.

In the latest violence, a bomb exploded Wednesday in the town of Andar, 90 miles southwest of the capital, as Afghans lined up at a mosque to register for ID cards for voting in Oct. 9 presidential elections.

U.N. and Afghan officials said at least two people were killed, including an Afghan member of the electoral board, and several others were injured.

Anti-government militants are blamed for many of those attacks and the deaths of more than 30 aid workers since March 2003, making the south and east virtually off-limits.

The assault on the MSF workers in northwestern Badghis, the deadliest yet on an international relief agency, raised fears that the north was also becoming too dangerous.

Medecins Sans Frontieres, or Doctors Without Borders, cited three main reasons for its pullout: dangers on the ground, dismay that the investigation into the June killings produced no results, and what it called the U.S.



Operational director of Medecins Sans Frontieres Kenny Gluck speaks about the relief agency's decision Wednesday to leave Afghanistan, partly due to security concerns.

military's use of humanitarian aid "for political and military motives."

U.S. and NATO troops run several so-called Provincial Reconstruction Teams across the country, in which soldiers provide health care, dig wells and perform other work normally carried out by civilians.

Aid groups long have feared that the practice blurs the lines between relief work and soldiers' efforts to persuade local communities to provide intelligence on militants. The U.S. military rejected the suggestion that its aid projects were endangering civilian lives.

"We don't put anyone in danger," spokesman Maj. Jon Siepmann said.

He said many aid groups were working effectively in areas where American troops also operated. Others "need to direct their concern toward the Taliban, toward al-Qaida. We do nothing here but help."

In the June 2 killings of its workers, two men on a motorcycle stopped a clearly marked MSF vehicle on a rural road in northwestern Badghis province. The three Europeans and two Afghans inside were shot dead.

A purported Taliban spokesman claimed responsibility and accused the victims of working for American interests — a shock to MSF, which like many agencies relies on neutrality to protect workers who venture into war zones. Police arrested 13 people over the killings. But Amir Shah Naibzada, the police chief in the area where the killings occurred, said Wednesday that all had been released. "We're still trying our best to find out who did this," he said.

Medecins Sans Frontieres said the government's failure to conduct a "credible investigation" was a factor in its decision to withdraw.

It was unclear when the estimated 80 international volunteers and 1,400 Afghan staff who worked for the medical relief agency in Afghanistan before the attack would stop their work for good. The group was expected to hand over its clinics and other programs to Afghan health authorities and other nongovernment organizations.

MSF has been working in Afghanistan for 14 years. The group, which won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1999, provides basic health care and support to hospitals in 13 of the country's 34 provinces.

Anti-malaria drug may be blamed in drowning

BY ROBERT WELLER
The Associated Press

DENVER — Defense attorneys for three U.S. soldiers charged with shoving two Iraqi civilians into the Tigris River where one of them drowned may argue that an anti-malaria drug triggered an uncontrollable rage, a military health expert said Tuesday.

Steve Robinson of the National Gulf War Research Center said he has been told by an attorney for one of the soldiers that he may be questioned about the drug, Lariam, during a hearing scheduled to begin Wednesday at nearby Fort Carson. The hearing will determine whether the soldiers will be court-martialed.

"I am not saying this is why people push people off bridges, but there seems to be a pretty plausible connection to rage issues to taking the drug," Robinson said.

Sgt. 1st Class Tracy E. Perkins, 33, 1st Lt. Jack M. Saville, 24, and Staff Sgt. Matthew J. Smith, 24, were charged with involuntary manslaughter in the drowning death in the city of Samarra, near Baghdad, on Jan. 3. Spc. Terry Bowdman, 21, is charged with assault for allegedly pushing a second man into the river with them. That man survived.

The anti-malaria drug given to U.S. military personnel who went to Iraq has already figured in another high-profile Army disciplinary case. A charge of cowardice was dropped against a Special Forces interrogator who said he suffered physical and psychological problems after taking Lariam.

IN THE WORLD

Powell urges action on Mideast issues

Secretary seeks to forward 'road map,' pressure Sudan to stop fighting

BY GEORGE GEDDA
The Associated Press

CAIRO, Egypt — Touching on two sensitive Mideast issues, Secretary of State Colin Powell on Wednesday repeated calls for reform in the Palestinian leadership and urged pressure on Sudan to stop violence blamed on ethnic cleansing.

Powell, in the first stop on a regional tour, also condemned the car bombing in Iraq that killed dozens of Iraqis — the deadliest since the United States handed over sovereignty to an interim government. He said that he still believed Iraq's elections could be held as scheduled in January.

"We are holding to that date," Powell said at a news conference started a series of meetings with Egyptian leaders. "We continue to solicit assistance from other nations to provide additional forces that might be able to provide security for the U.N. workers who are coming in for the election."



Egypt's President Hosni Mubarak, right, talks with Secretary of State Colin Powell during a meeting in Cairo on Wednesday. Cairo is the first leg of a Middle East tour for Powell.

Powell arrived in Egypt on Tuesday on a Mideast tour aimed at trying to revive the Palestinian-Israeli peace process, dubbed the "road map," and talking with some of America's closest

Arab allies about Iraq's future, the war on terror, violence in Sudan and the U.S. initiative to encourage greater democracy in this troubled region.

On Sudan, where Arab-led mil-

itia have attacked blacks in the Darfur region, Powell said he agreed with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak that "we have to give the Sudanese government more time" to stop the fighting

and facilitate humanitarian deliveries to the people in the besieged region.

But Powell described the situation as catastrophic in an interview with Egyptian Television and noted that a proposed U.N. Security Council resolution being circulated by the United States would give Sudan a month to make progress.

Referring to the resolution, Powell said, "At the end of 30 days, one more month, the Security Council has to consider possible measures. It might even include sanctions," he said in an interview with the Al Akhbar newspaper.

After Powell and Mubarak met Wednesday morning, presidential spokesman Maged Abdel Fattah issued a statement to reporters saying the two had agreed Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat and Palestinian Prime Minister Ahmed Qureia should work together.

Payments discussed for settlers to be displaced by Israel's Gaza pullout

BY ARTHUR MAX
The Associated Press

JERUSALEM — Israel has started compensation talks with Jewish settlers ready to leave the West Bank and Gaza Strip, their lawyer said Wednesday, as part of an evacuation plan that has fueled a Palestinian power struggle.

With the Israeli pullout plan moving forward, Palestinian Prime Minister Ahmed Qureia began asserting his authority over a branch of the security forces Wednesday, a concession he won from Yasser Arafat after a 10-day standoff that paralyzed the Palestinian leadership.

U.S. and Israeli leaders — and many Palestinians — have voiced skepticism that the deal struck Tuesday was the last word in the tussle between Arafat and a corps of politicians and young militants brooding under his dictatorial rule.

Political tensions among the Palestinians were heightened by Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon's plan to withdraw the army and all Jewish settlers from Gaza by September 2005. Israeli Justice Ministry officials held their first meeting with a lawyer representing 90 families living in the Gaza settlements and four in the West Bank, also slated for evacuation, over compensation for voluntarily leaving their homes.

The lawyer, Joseph Tamir, said advance payments could be made as early as October, though it was unclear how much money the settlers would receive or when they would have to move.

"They were playing their cards very close to the chest," Tamir said, "but an advance that does not reflect the ability to buy a new home is not realistic."



Prime Minister Ariel Sharon

Nearly all the families moved to the settlements for economic reasons rather than an ideological commitment, Tamir said.

Ideologues among the settlers threaten to resist evacuation, charging that giving up a few settlements means abandoning parts of the God-given Jewish homeland and would endanger Israel's security.

Deportation appeal by Bobby Fischer rejected

The Associated Press

TOKYO — Japanese immigration officials have rejected former world chess champion Bobby Fischer's appeal of their decision to deport him for attempting to travel on an invalid U.S. passport, an adviser to Fischer said Wednesday.

The decision was made Tuesday at the end of a two-day hearing, according to John Bosnitch, a Canadian journalist who acted as an adviser to Fischer during the proceedings. Fischer, who considers his detention "a kidnapping," can appeal again, Bosnitch said.

Fischer was apprehended two weeks ago after trying to board a flight at the international airport in Narita, just outside Tokyo, for allegedly traveling with a revoked U.S. passport. Fischer is wanted in the United States for playing a chess match in the former Yugoslavia in 1992 in defiance of international sanctions.

Despite Tuesday's decision, it was unlikely that Fischer would be deported soon.

Fischer now has until Friday to lodge another appeal, this time to Japan's justice minister. Fischer, who claims his passport was revoked without due process, can also seek a court injunction to stop the immigration proceedings altogether.

Bosnitch said Fischer believes he has been "seized."

"He considers the entire ordeal to date to be nothing more than a kidnapping, a completely illegal procedure on both the American side and the Japanese side," Bosnitch said.

Bosnitch said Fischer has also requested his immediate, provisional release.

"He poses no flight risk, he has nowhere to go, he has no passport," Bosnitch said. "There is no need for him to remain in custody."

Immigration officials refuse to comment on the details of Fischer's case. His hearing was closed to the media.

Bosnitch said that Fischer claimed during the hearing to have been physically mistreated.

"He hasn't seen the sun since the day he was seized," Bosnitch said. "He was bruised on his face, you could see welts in his arm."

"He is a 61-year-old man, and he claims to have been assaulted twice. He has the bruises and the cuts to prove it."

Fischer rocketed to fame in the United States at the height of the Cold War when he defeated Boris Spassky of the Soviet Union in a series of games in Reykjavik, Iceland, in 1972.

His genius for chess was quickly overshadowed by his eccentric behavior, however.

He lost his title as world champion in 1978 and then largely vanished from the public eye. Fischer resurfaced to win the Yugoslavia rematch against Spassky in 1992, and took home more than \$3 million in prize money.

Seivert said he traveled frequently before he was detained, often visiting Japan, the Philippines, Germany and Switzerland.

Though he kept a low profile, he was frequently interviewed by a radio station in the Philippines. In one session he praised the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, saying America should be "wiped out" and describing Jews as "thieving, lying bastards."

Death sentences upheld for subway gassers

The Associated Press

TOKYO — A court in Japan on Wednesday upheld death sentences for two ex-cult members convicted in a 1995 nerve gas attack on Tokyo's subways that killed 12 people and injured thousands. Four other former members arrested earlier this month for allegedly trying to kill Japan's national police chief were released.

The Tokyo High Court rejected the appeals of Toru Toyoda, 36, and Kenichi Hirose, 40, who were sentenced to death by hanging by a lower court in 2000, court spokesman Sadakazu Takagi said.

The two were among five Aum Shinrikyo members who released sarin gas on subway trains on March 20, 1995.

The high court also upheld the Tokyo District Court's life imprisonment for Shigeo Sugimoto, 45, who drove the getaway car for a third attacker.

A total of 13 former cultists have been sentenced to death for the subway gassing, including founder Shoko Asahara, who was sentenced to hang in February for masterminding the assault and about a dozen other crimes linked to the cult.

None of those convicted has been executed yet.

460 N. Koreans defect during 2-day airlift

By SOO-JEONG LEE

The Associated Press

SEOUL — The second wave in the biggest mass defection of North Koreans to South Korea arrived Wednesday on a flight from an unidentified Southeast Asian country, bringing the total in the two-day airlift to nearly 460.

The group of 227 North Koreans arrived at Incheon International Airport on a chartered Ko-

rean Air plane arranged by the South Korean government, South Korea's Yonhap news agency said.

South Korean government officials have been reluctant to confirm the arrival of the North Koreans and have declined to reveal which country they are coming from, but news reports said that 230 arrived Tuesday.

A trickle of defectors to the South has grown into a steady

stream in recent years as more North Koreans flee hunger and repression in their communist country, mostly fleeing across its long border with China before heading to other countries.

Human rights groups have said that hundreds of North Koreans were living in Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia and other Southeast Asian countries, and were eager to leave for South Korea.

The government has barred re-

porters from covering the arrival of defectors. South Korean footage captured from afar Tuesday showed the first group arriving and being swiftly taken away in buses.

The government typically puts defectors through a month of questioning before giving them a two-month orientation course on how to make their way in their new country at home.

Analysts cautioned against interpreting the arrivals as heralding further mass defections from the communist state. Koh Yu-hwan, a North Korea expert in Seoul, said North Korea probably would try to crack down harder on its citizens seeking to defect.

Over 5,000 North Koreans have defected to South Korea since the 1950-53 Korean War.

Last year, the number of defectors arriving in the South rose to 1,285, up from 1,140 in 2002 and 583 in 2001. South Korea's Unification Minister Chung Dong-yong said Tuesday the number of defectors was expected to reach 10,000 within "a couple of years."

"It is necessary to review and upgrade the general policy," toward the defectors, Chung said.

"Until now, it was more at the level of helping a small group of North Korean defectors settling down."

North Korea has depended on outside help to feed its 22 million people since 1995.

The Koreans were divided in 1945. Their border remains sealed and heavily guarded by nearly 2 million troops on both sides following the 1950-53 Korean War that ended in a truce, not a peace treaty.



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Two killed, several hurt in religious riots in India

By RUPAK SANYAL

The Associated Press

VERAVAL, India — Muslims and Hindus burned buildings and clashed with police Wednesday in a third day of sectarian riots in this western Indian town, throwing acid at officers who shot at the crowd. The unrest has left two dead and more than a dozen wounded.

Thousands of police patrolled the streets, fearing the religious violence could escalate. More than 1,000 people were killed in three months of Hindu-Muslim rioting, two years ago in Gujarat state, where the coastal town of Veraval is located.

Police said the recent fighting began Monday when young Muslim males heckled a passing Hindu girl, sparking riots and clashes. Two small mosques and about 25 shops were burned.

A curfew was lifted Wednesday but reimposed within hours after fighting broke out again, police officer T.S. Bist said.

Police fired about 20 rounds at

crowds that were burning shops and fish warehouses, Bist said. Six protesters were hospitalized.

Rioters retaliated by throwing acid bombs at police officers, four of whom were hospitalized, Bist said.

The violence spread to Rajkot, another town in Gujarat state, where Hindus and Muslims clashed Wednesday. Officers fired tear gas and used bamboo sticks to break up rioters, who also burned two cars, police said.

Muslim residents of Veraval demanded the reconstruction of three Islamic shrines they said were burned by Hindus.

"Unfortunately, even police did not bother to stop these fanatics who attacked the places of religious worship," Maqbool Hussain, a Muslim community leader, told The Associated Press.

Superintendent of police B.D. Vaghela said the people who attacked on the shrines had been arrested and security tightened at all places of worship.

The riots two years ago erupted after 60 Hindus traveling in a train were burned to death.

S. Korean president replaces 2 government officials

SEOUL — President Roh Moo-hyun replaced his defense minister on Wednesday amid a controversy over the military's handling of a confrontation along the western maritime border between South and North Korea. Separately, the president replaced his justice minister.

The defense minister, Cho Young-ki, offered his resignation on Tuesday to accept responsibility for a communication mishap in the July 14 incident, which occurred when a suspected North Korean vessel sailed into southern waters.

At the time, the South Korean navy reported that it sent five warning messages over the radio to North Korean counterparts, and fired two warning shots because the North failed to respond.

Later, however, the South Korean military acknowledged that North Korea had responded over the special radio channel between the two sides, saying the vessel was not North Korean but a fishing boat from China.

It was unclear why military officials failed to report that they had received a radio message from the North Koreans.

The new defense minister is 62-year-old Yoon Kwang-woong, who had served as the presidential aide for defense affairs.

Roh also replaced South Korea's first female justice minister, Kang Kim-sil, with Kim Seung-kyu, a 60-year-old former vice justice minister, the presidential Blue House said. It did not say why Kang was replaced.

From The Associated Press

IN THE STATES

Lawsuit challenges detention of American

BY ANNE GEARAN
The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — The parents of an American jailed without charges in Saudi Arabia sued the United States on Wednesday in what lawyers say is the first lawsuit filed on behalf of a U.S. citizen detained in a third country at the U.S. government's request.

The parents claim his being held in Saudi Arabia is a deliberate attempt to keep him out of U.S. courts and in the hands of jailers who could abuse or torture him for information.

The family's lawyers cite last month's Supreme Court rulings that alleged enemy combatants held at the U.S. naval base at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, can take their claims to U.S. courts.

Ahmed Abu Ali was arrested 13 months ago in Saudi Arabia as part of an American anti-terrorism investigation. The U.S. government ordered the arrest and has refused

Saudi Arabia holding terrorism suspect at United States' request

to say when or if Abu Ali would be charged or released, the family alleged in a suit filed in U.S. District Court in Washington.

The family wants an American judge to order Abu Ali returned to the United States, where he might face charges as part of an alleged terrorism training ring in Virginia. The suit names Attorney General John Ashcroft, Secretary of State Colin Powell and others and cites the Supreme Court rulings last month that outlined legal rights for citizens and non-citizens detained in the war on terrorism.

"Although petitioner Ahmed Abu Ali presently is physically confined in Saudi Arabia, (the U.S. government) directed and conspired with Saudi co-conspirators to carry

out his arrest and indefinite detention in that country without due process protections and in violation of other statutory and constitutional standards," lawyers for Abu Ali's family wrote.

Human rights lawyers who drafted the suit on behalf of Abu Ali's family claimed that his case is similar to others in which the United States has sent suspected terrorists to foreign countries to use harsher interrogation techniques than U.S. law allows.

Justice Department spokesman Mark Corallo declined comment on the lawsuit Wednesday. In previous cases challenging detention of potential terror suspects, the government has argued that American courts have no jurisdiction over foreigners

held abroad, or over U.S. citizens held as enemy combatants in the United States.

The Supreme Court rejected much of that legal argument in two cases last month, and lawyers for foreign-born men held at Guantanamo are now pressing for their release in the same court where Abu Ali's case was filed.

The lawyers for Abu Ali's family said he, like the Guantanamo detainees, has a legal right to challenge his treatment in U.S. courts.

Abu Ali in this case meets similar jurisdictional criteria, and, especially as a U.S. citizen, should be afforded this fundamental right," the suit said.

Abu Ali was born in Texas and holds dual U.S.-Jordanian citizenship. He was valedictorian of his high school class in Falls Church, Va., and was studying at a Saudi university when he was arrested in June 2003, the lawsuit said. His parents and siblings live in Falls Church, a suburb of Washington.

Nixon aide LaRue dies

BILOXI, Miss. — Fred LaRue, a high-ranking Nixon administration official who served a prison term for his role in Watergate and was among those rumored to be Deep Throat, has died.

He was 75. His body was discovered Tuesday by a maid who entered his hotel room in Biloxi, Corner Gary Hargrove said. The coroner said he believes LaRue died Saturday of natural causes.

LaRue was known as the "hagman" who delivered payoffs to keep participants in the Watergate break-in quiet, and served 4 1/2 months in federal prison for conspiracy to obstruct justice.

LaRue was present at a 1972 meeting with Mitchell and Nixon aide Jeb Stuart Magruder at Nixon's vacation home in Key Biscayne, Fla., where the plan to break in Democratic headquarters at the Watergate complex in Washington allegedly was hatched. LaRue said he advised against the burglary.

Disputed car dealings

NORFOLK, Va. — A hearing officer for state regulators recommended shutting down a used car dealer accused of luring young servicemembers from North Carolina, and then pressuring them to buy a car by playing on fears they'd be stranded without one.

Laurie Riddles said a civil penalty would be inadequate given Ronnie Neff's "unconscionable actions." She recommended the state Motor Vehicle Dealer Board revoke his license to be a dealer.

"Even the most ardent proponent of the philosophy of 'Buyer beware' could not help but find Mr. Neff's dealings... unacceptable," Riddles wrote in the report made public Tuesday.

Neff, the owner of Carland, said Tuesday night he wasn't surprised. "It's hard to fight the government," he said.

From The Associated Press

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Wife, party's stars laud Kerry's war record

BY DARLENE SUPERVILLE
The Associated Press

BOSTON — John Kerry headed back to his hometown Wednesday to collect the Democratic Party's nomination for the White House and watch his running mate test his courtroom-edited Southern charm on convention delegates and a nationwide TV audience.

After campaigning his way home through Florida, Virginia and Pennsylvania this week, the Massachusetts senator arranged a Boston Harbor arrival as 4,350-plus delegates turned their attention to John Edwards, the convention's star attraction Wednesday.

Aiming to infuse the Democrats' drive for the White House with youth and energy, Edwards will address delegates just before they begin the once-every-four-years roll call of states to make Kerry their presidential nominee.

Kerry planned a dramatic arrival, riding a water taxi across the harbor. On Tuesday, he cited his qualifications to be commander in chief and asserted, "I will and I can fight a more effective war on terror than George Bush is."

Visiting Cam Pendleton Marine Corps Base on Tuesday in California, Vice President Dick Cheney said both Kerry and Edwards voted yes for war, but against subsequent funding for the troops. "We need a president who will back our troops 100 percent, and that's exactly what we've got in George W. Bush," the vice president said.

Kerry is even or slightly ahead of President Bush in many pre-convention polls. At the same time, a new Washington Post-ABC poll showed that more than half those surveyed said they knew only a little or hardly at all about the Massachusetts senator's positions on issues.

And after months of sustained GOP television attacks on Kerry, more than 40 percent called him too liberal on most issues.

*"... I urge you,
please, cast a
vote for
embryonic stem
cell research."*

Ron Reagan
son of President Reagan,
during convention speech

At the Democratic Convention on Tuesday night, in her first big political speech, Kerry's wife, Teresa Heinz Kerry, sought to shield him from that accusation, saying his positions on the environment and other issues were just common sense. She took her own jabs at Bush, describing her husband as a fighter who earned three Purple Hearts "the old-fashioned way, by putting his life on the line for his country."

Bush served stateside during Vietnam, Kerry volunteered for combat.

"No one will defend this nation more vigorously than he will," Heinz Kerry said of her husband.

Massachusetts Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, the aging liberal icon whom Republicans happily link to Kerry, accused Bush of wasting the "enormous goodwill that flowed to America from across the world" after the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

And in what could be one of the greatest coups of the presidential campaign, Ronald Reagan, the youngest son of the late president, appeared on the podium to speak about stem-cell research.

He mentioned neither Kerry nor Bush. But he made clear that his sentiments were with Kerry, who had called to thank him for accepting the Democratic invitation.

Some of the biggest applause of the night came for Barack Obama, the Democratic candidate for Senate from Illinois who described Kerry as a war hero who has long made "tough choices when easier ones were available."

The youngest speaker at the convention was less hesitant about naming names. Ilana Wexler, a 12-year-old from Oakland, Calif., who founded a group called kidsforkerry.org, took a job at Cheney for his recent cussing-out of Democratic Sen. Patrick Leahy on the Senate floor.

"Our vice president deserves a long time out," the girl said, to roars of approval.

Several of Kerry's former primary foes had their turn at the convention podium. Former Vermont Gov. Howard Dean, who stirred emotions early in the campaign when he vowed to represent the "Democratic wing of the Democratic Party," also drew loud applause.



Teresa Heinz Kerry, wife of Democratic presidential nominee Sen. John Kerry, promotes her husband's service in the Vietnam War in a speech at the Democratic National Convention in Boston on Tuesday. "No one will defend this nation more vigorously than he will," Heinz Kerry said.

'Skinny kid with funny name' wows Dems in Boston

BY CHRISTOPHER WILLS
The Associated Press

BOSTON — Making his national debut, "a skinny kid with a funny name" brought Democrats to their feet with a call for unity and a message of hope.

Barack Obama, an up-and-coming Senate hopeful from Illinois, spoke from experience about the importance of diversity in American life, but reminded the Democratic National Convention of the nation's motto: "E pluribus unum" — out of many, one.

Delivering the convention keynote Tuesday night, Obama argued against the "politics of cynicism" that divides America into liberal and conservative, black and white. And he urged the nation to reject the "spinnmasters and negative ad peddlers" who try to divide it.

"I say to them tonight, there's not a liberal America and a conservative America — there's the United States of America," he said, getting a standing ovation.

Obama, the son of a white woman from Kansas and a black man from Kenya, was raised in Hawaii and became a community activist on Chicago's South Side before going to Harvard Law School.

If elected this fall, Obama, 28, would become the Senate's only black member and the fifth black senator in history. He has no opponent in the race because the Republican, Jack Ryan, dropped out after unelected divorce records showed Ryan's ex-wife had accused him of taking her to sex clubs.

The convention delegates gave Obama a standing ovation and wildly waved blue and white signs bearing his name. There was a sense in the arena that a new star of the Democratic Party was emerging.



U.S. Senate candidate Barack Obama, a state senator from Illinois, gives the keynote address at the Democratic National Convention on Tuesday in Boston.

"He's got the ability to touch the hearts and minds of people in this country that just need hope," said Illinois House Speaker Michael Madigan.

Obama denounced President Bush's handling of the Iraq war, without mentioning him by name.

"When we send our young men and women into harm's way, we have a solemn obligation not to fudge the numbers or shade the truth about why they're going," Obama said.

No Bush-bashing edict hard for some to handle

BY RON FOURNIER
The Associated Press

BOSTON — No Bush-bashing, the memo said. No way, some Democrats replied.

Eager to take President Bush head-on, they have found the convention's go-positive strategy easier to understand than to heed.

Donna Brazile is one. Al Gore's former campaign manager received written instructions from John Kerry's campaign to keep the nominating convention focused on the candidate, not the Republican incumbent.

"Being a Christian woman, I called them and said, 'Lord, have mercy, I cannot hold my tongue. What am I going to do?'" she said.

Bite your tongue, she was told. Arizona Gov. Janet Napolitano laughed at the thought. "She must have calluses," the governor said.

They were not the only Democrats champing at the bit, struggling to walk that fine line between going too hard on Bush and being too soft.

"Let Kerry and Edwards be the good cops," Rep. Jesse Jackson, D-Ill., told Louisiana delegates. "But we'll be fighting in the streets." Later, Jackson said he was talking about political war-

fare waged on behalf of Kerry and running mate John Edwards.

Bringing that fight indoors would upset Kerry's image machine, including a team of writers who rounded off the rough edges of every convention speech.

■ Sen. Ted Kennedy, D-Mass., denounced "this misguided war in Iraq." Not quite like calling it "Iraq" made up in Texas, as Kennedy did 11 months ago.

■ Former Kerry rival Howard Dean spoke of a foreign policy "that relies on telling the truth to the American people." He did not mention Bush by name nor directly accuse him of lying, diplomatic niceties that Dean has never before extended to the incumbent.

■ Al Gore, who once said Bush had "twisted values and atrocious policies" on Iraq, mildly accused the president of "confusing al-Qaida with Iraq."

It was all part of Kerry's strategy to appeal to independent voters, most of whom tell pollsters they're turned off by negative politics.

Attacking the president would galvanize the 4,000-plus delegates in Boston and hard-core Democrats elsewhere. But Kerry's team has determined that the base is already united against the White House. What's needed are the independent undecideds.

More ballot woes in Florida

Officials say computer crash wiped out election records

By HILARY ROXE

The Associated Press

MIAMI — A computer crash erased detailed records from Miami-Dade County's first widespread use of touchscreen voting machines, raising again the specter of elections troubles in Florida, where the new technology was supposed to put an end to such problems.

The crashes occurred on May and November of 2003, erasing information from the September 2002 gubernatorial primaries and other elections, election officials said Tuesday.

The malfunction was made public after the Miami-Dade Election Reform Coalition, a citizen's group, requested all data from the 2002 gubernatorial primary between Democratic candidates Janet Reno and Bill McBride.

In December, officials began backing up the data daily, to help avoid similar data wipeouts in the future, said Seth Kaplan, spokesman for the county's elections supervisor.

The loss of data underscores problems with the touchscreen voting machines, the citizen's group said.

"This is a disaster waiting to happen," said Lida Rodriguez-Tessie, chairwoman of the Miami-Dade Election Reform Coalition. "Of course it's worrisome."

The group is concerned about the machines' effectiveness, following revelations about other problems with the system. Last month, state officials said the touchscreen systems used by 11 counties had a bug that would make a manual recount impossible.

Earlier this month, a newspaper study indicated touchscreen machines did not perform as well as those that scanned paper ballots.

Also Tuesday, election reform groups asked a judge to stop down a state rule preventing counties to use the machines from conducting manual recounts from them.

State election officers say manual recounts are not needed since the machines tell each voter if they are skipping a race, known as an undervote, and will not let them vote twice for the same race, known as an overvote. The officials also maintain that the computer systems running the machines can be trusted to count the votes accurately as they're cast, and give the final numbers when needed.

But lawyers representing the ACLU and other groups said the state should require a paper trail in case a physical recount is needed, as it was in the 2000 presidential race in Florida.

"I have concern about votes that are cast but not recorded," said Howard Simon, executive director for ACLU of Florida.

Florida counties without the touchscreen machines use optical scanning technology, in which computers read voters' pencil marks on paper ballots, and would be able to do physical recounts in tight races.



Deborah Clark, supervisor of elections in Pinellas County, Fla., demonstrates the voting procedure using a touchscreen voting machine Tuesday in Tallahassee, Fla. Clark's county uses touchscreen voting machines.

Young doctors' hours cut

By ALICIA CHANG

The Associated Press

Doctors fresh out of medical school are working fewer hours compared to their predecessors, thanks to new rules that went into effect a year ago curbing duty time.

But growing pains abound. Some medical students and experienced doctors are getting stuck with more work and hospitals are spending millions of dollars overhauling work schedules.

The new demands were put in place last July after persisting concerns that excessive hours clocked by weary residents may put patients at risk.

All of these changes have been done with an eye toward improving the quality of patient care," said Dr. Jordan Cohen, president of the American Association of Medical Colleges, representing more than 400 major teaching hospitals.

The guidelines, adopted by the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education, which oversees more than 7,800 residency programs, limited duty hours to 80 hours a week for the nation's nearly 100,000 doctors-in-training.

Before that, it was not uncommon for residents in certain specialties such as surgery to log more than 100 hours a week.

At least 10 hours of rest between shifts and cannot be on duty for more than 24 hours straight.

Residency is the period right after medical school, typically lasting three to seven years — in which doctors train in their specialized fields under supervision.

Dr. Jeff Huebner, a third-year

Doctors' orders

New rules that limit the number of hours medical residents can work are having an impact, though some medical students and more experienced doctors are working longer.

► Maximum 80 hours per week

M T W T F S S

► Minimum of 10 hours of rest between shifts

► On duty for no more than 24 hours straight

Source: Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education

family medicine resident at the University of Washington in Seattle, has borne his share of working excessive hours, but now has more energy to teach interns and treat patients.

"There's a culture shift," said Huebner, 29. "Many residents in our generation of doctors view that you don't have to work 100 hours a week because it's not good for your overall well-being."

Most residency programs are in compliance with the new standards, according to the accreditation council. Since last July, it reviewed 2,019 programs — or about a quarter of total programs — and cited 5 percent for duty-hour violations. Nearly half of the offenses were for breaking the 80-hour week limit.

The accreditation council also allowed 75 surgical programs to extend resident work hours to 88 hours a week. So far, 53 doctors have filed complaints about work-hour breaches. Eleven cases were dismissed for lack of evidence.

The American Medical Student Association believes "violations are underreported and says residents fear tattling could threaten their program's accreditation."

American Indian art stamps debut

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON — A series of stamps and postal cards featuring American Indian art will be issued next month by the Postal Service.

The stamps and cards will come with 10 different images, the post office said Wednesday. The 37-cent, self-adhesive stamps and 23-cent postal cards will be issued Aug. 21 in Santa Fe, N.M., and will go on sale nationwide the following Monday.

These stamps represent a small sampling of the diverse ways that Native Americans created objects used in their everyday lives that were also extraordinary expressions of beauty," said Anita Rizzotto, Postal Service chief marketing officer and senior vice president.

Art featured on the stamps includes:

■ A Mimbres bowl, a black-on-white style pottery produced about 1100 B.C. by the Mimbres people in what is now New Mexico.

■ A Kutenai parfleche — a rawhide container — collected around 1900, probably in Idaho.

■ Two Tlingit sculptures.

■ A detail from a Ho-Chunk (Winnebago) bag. ■ A Miccosukee-Seminole doll made in the early years of the 20th century in Florida.

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FACES 'N' PLACES

Fantasia living the fantasy of 'Idol' life

BY MICHAEL FELBERBAUM
The Associated Press

CHARLOTTE, N.C.

A year ago, she was Fantasia Barrino, unemployed and borrowing money to pay rent on a one-bedroom apartment, where she spent days playing with her 1-year-old daughter, Zion.

Now, after winning the "American Idol" competition, she has a new \$500,000, 5,000-square-foot home, a new single in stores and a new outlook on life.

And a new name: just "Fantasia."

Her new digs aren't even furnished yet, but the 19-year-old singer invited The Associated Press over recently for a look at the bare walls and hardwood floors. With her puppy, Diva, by her side, Fantasia talked about preparations for three months of touring and her first single, "I Believe," which she first sang during the "Idol" finals and hit U.S. stores in June.

AP: Did it feel the same to sing "I Believe" in the studio as it did on stage?

Fantasia: The words of the song are "Finally, I believe," and I always tell people that I always believed I would be a singer, and I always wanted to be. I worked hard at it, but I struggled to try to get it and when I heard the words of the song, I was like, "Whoa, finally I believe." I really do.

AP: Any plans for your album yet?

Fantasia: I want music for everybody. I want music that will encourage people if they are going through something.

AP: Are you finding it harder to stay yourself?

Fantasia: Nothing has really changed about me. I'm still the same old girl. I think the only thing that's changed now is that I have money in my pocket and I'm able to do for my family and for my child, and able to share my music with the world.

AP: Do you have a message for young mothers?

Fantasia: Just keep your head up because a lot of times when you're young women have kids, a lot of people seem to down them because you're not married and you're so young and had a child out of wedlock... If God forges me, then you guys can forgive me too... If you're a single mom and you have a dream, go after it.

AP: How would you describe your life so far?

Fantasia: It was tough trying to get a job, it was tough trying to get money. I borrowed money from people and I don't have that to that no more. When I was crying when I won, I was crying about all that stuff. And I was like "Gosh, I did it. I borrowed but I don't have to borrow anymore." I've been singing for a long time now, since I was 5 years old, trying to get out there, trying to be heard. To me it wasn't all about the money, it was all about being in front of people, and hope-

fully my music could encourage somebody.

AP: Your audition in Atlanta almost didn't happen; why?

Fantasia: We drove all the way to Atlanta with \$20 in our pocket... The first day everybody was in the Georgia Dome singing... They had karaoke going... The next morning they started the auditions and I said, "I can't sing on an empty stomach..." We left and we got back and there were about 25 of us and they wouldn't let us back in... I went back to my cousin's house in Atlanta and all of my family kept calling me. And my dad and everybody was saying, "Maybe you should go back. Just go back, try it one more time..." I stood in front of the door and the security guard who heard me sing at the karaoke came to the door and said, "Did you audition?" And I said, "No sir." And he said, "Why not?" And I said "They won't let me back in." So, he said, "Oh, I gotta get you in." He took me by my hand, took me in the building, and I was the last one on the field to audition.

AP: Is this what you envisioned it would be?

Fantasia: Yeah. Hard work, a lot of singing, a lot of traveling, and a lot of recording. And I used to watch and TV and say "If they can do it, I can do it." ... As long as you love what you do, then you're good.

AP: Where do you see yourself in five, 10 years?

Fantasia: I want to do everything. I want to do some acting, own my own clothing line, but most of all I want to do some centers around North Carolina, just some teen centers with a lot of stuff to do... There's a lot of young people out there on the streets who think that's what life is all about.

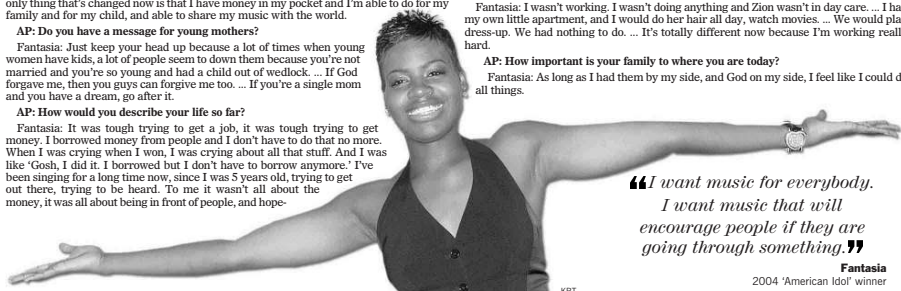
Someone asked me, "Do you think you'll just be around for this, you win the Idol and you do a CD and you're gone?" I said, "Nope, they're not gonna forget me. I'm not gonna let 'em. I'm gonna get on a cereal box if I have to, with Cap'n Crunch, whatever I have to do."

AP: How does your daily life now compare to a year ago?

Fantasia: I wasn't working. I wasn't doing anything and Zion wasn't in day care... I had my own little apartment, and I would do her hair all day, watch movies... We would play dress-up. We had nothing to do... It's totally different now because I'm working really hard.

AP: How important is your family to where you are today?

Fantasia: As long as I had them by my side, and God on my side, I feel like I could do all things.



*"I want music for everybody.
I want music that will
encourage people if they are
going through something."*

Fantasia

2004 'American Idol' winner

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Moore on a film-making roll

The success of "Fahrenheit 9/11" is making Michael Moore's life a bit easier on his next film.

With "Fahrenheit 9/11" becoming the first documentary to cross the \$100 million mark at the domestic box office, director Moore expects a smooth path on raising money to make "Sicko," his critique of health-maintenance organizations.

Moore would not provide details but said financing of his next movie was in the works, thanks to "Fahrenheit 9/11," which cost just \$6 million to make.

Ja Rule in Canadian court

Ja Rule appeared in a Toronto court and was released on \$7,500 bail on an assault charge.

The 28-year-old rapper, whose real name is Jeffrey Atkins, didn't enter a plea Monday on the charge of assault causing bodily harm. He's scheduled to return to Provincial Court on Aug. 30 for a trial date to be set.

He's been in Toronto often this year while shooting "Assault on Precinct 13."

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Good for services to share

Being married to a Marine, I hear all of the little comments the Marines make about the new Army battle dress uniforms and that they mimic the Marines' digital cammies. I have two words for all who make these comments: Shut up!

First, I have seen the new uniform when the command sergeant major of the Army came and I can say that the uniform's colors, look and style are completely different from the Marines' cammies. So it is not the same. If the pattern resembles the Marine's, so what? The last time I checked we are all on the same team, fighting for the same country in the same places, and I know that I want my comrades to be as safe as possible when they are out in the field—regardless of what service they are in.

If the Marines had a style or pattern that was better and helped them blend in with their environment better or a fabric that kept their troops cooler in the hot desert, shouldn't they be glad to help out their fellow servicemen? If the Army did, they should be proud that their innovation is spreading to other services and contributing to the overall safety of servicemen.

This pertains to everything that the military does: If one service does things better,

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it should share. Sometimes great goes too far. Marines, your uniforms are still distinct and you will always stand out from the other services because of what you do with so few resources.

We respect you, so show a little respect

Fox News forges the big-tenet model

By EDWARD WASSERMAN

Fox News is the subject of dozens of crazy tales at a Foxey Scott book and now a full-length documentary (Robert Greenwald's "Outfoxed"). Fox is revered and reviled for its political tilt, which it both embraces and disavows.

Fox brandishes its "fair and balanced" slogan, paradoxically, as both a repudiation of bias and as code for the rebalancing it promises to offset the liberalism alleged of its rivals.

Archival CNN draws more total viewers per day, as people check in for news updates. But because Fox's audience tends to stay put, treating it like talk radio, it now has more people tuned in at any given moment, hence its plausible claim to have overtaken CNN as cable news leader.

Not bad for an outfit that's not yet a decade old. Its real history began only in 1996, when the former GOP strategist Rupert Murdoch nabbed Fox's network. Roger Ailes defected from MSNBC, the hapless Microsoft-NBC partnership. Ailes took over the Fox news division that Rupert Murdoch targeted in purchase surveys that found that sizable numbers of people believed U.S. media to have a leftist bias.

Fox, Fox is relatively puny. Its highest rated show, "The O'Reilly Factor," pulls 2 million viewers. By contrast, as Steve Reinold noted in an online analysis, the "CBS Evening News" gets 8 million to 10 million considered in dozens disappear.

But Fox's influence far exceeds its reach. Fox News poses an outsized challenge to the rest of the media.

With the imperatives of cable favoring media that target and deliver audience slivers of predictable composition, Fox is pioneering the use of political ideology to create and sustain a market. Others are learning.

I'd never really watched Fox, so I spent a couple of nights. I expected a combing, biased, factually corrupt report. Instead, by day I found a professional news operation.

There were limits. The staff seemed small. As usual with U.S. media, news from abroad was sparse. Fox did carry the GOP's water on some stories, seemed to deliberately downplay Iraq and ignored the John Kerry campaign.

But the guests were more diverse than on rival networks, where U.S. experts generally speak for the entire human race; anchors were sharp and well-briefed, and they baited conservative guests from the left and liberals from the right. The report was well-paced, insightful and engaging.

Then night fell, the trunk lid cracked open, and the bats flew out. Sean Hannity was simply a bully, without finesse or subtlety. When the subject was trial lawyers, he asserted, essentially, that Sen. John Edwards had halted innovation through the economy and kept millions of Americans from receiving health care.

But Bill O'Reilly was a revealing, smug

back by showing that you can contribute your advances in the uniform department and do not need to return to first grade to learn how to share.

Nicole L. Kojetin
Torii Station, Okinawa

Pro-gay articles questioned

The writer of the July 14 column "Need is great, so anti-gay DOD rule must be reformed" recommended that, in light of the great need for certain key military occupations, the Department of Defense should quit discharging openly gay personnel.

I have read at least three editorials/columns and articles like this within the last five months in Stars and Stripes. In a small paper such as this one, it is interesting to note the articles and editorials Stars and Stripes chooses to run. After all, space is very limited. This causes me to wonder why we have had three such articles about this exact issue from the exact same pro-homosexual viewpoint in Stars and Stripes. Everyone is aware of the war in Iraq and Afghanistan. Be aware that there is another war being waged. Someone who may not share your vision or ideals under the current policies for our armed forces is also waging theirs.

Colin F. Smith
Schimmern, Netherlands

and derisive. With guests he is, as Churchill said to the Germans, either at their feet or on their backs. Those he dislikes, he dismembers them. In a signature moment with ex-House Speaker Newt Gingrich, they nodded sagely over a claim that 80 percent of the country shares core values, leaving only media and university lib-eralists—Hollywood, too, O'Reilly said—outside the "American" consensus.

Before they broke for a Bush re-election ad and the Laci Peterson murder trial, the two were half-step away from redefining citizenship as excluding Democrats.

In Collins' insightful book, O'Reilly says that his model was a newspaper's opinion pages. But the difference is huge, and that's what makes Fox so unsettling. A typical newspaper has commercial reasons for trying to widen its audience and therefore appeals to an expansive notion of common interest.

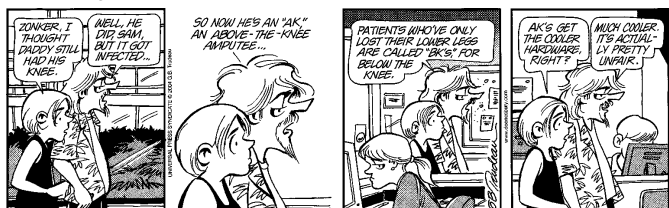
A niche news channel has a different commercial model. It seeks to attract and continually reclaim an audience fragment, by reiterating the worldview that first drew them.

It's a model that builds a corps of the faithful but gains nothing from persuasion, let alone the give-and-take by which a political culture thrives. Fox is pioneering a one-person conversation in which we have nothing to offer one another but reassurance—or abuse.

Edward Wasserman is Knight professor of journalism ethics at Washington and Lee University in Lexington, Va. He wrote this column for The Miami Herald.

BY GARRY TRUDEAU

Doonesbury



OPINION

Tension evident even as Dems harmonize

From where the old-timers sit — make that the geezers who view this from the perspective of ancient political history — this may be the most exceptional Democratic National Convention in memory, not only in its utter lack of relevance in choosing a presidential candidate, but in the absence of dissension among delegates and special interests. One can cut the harmony with a knife.

Dan Thomasson



Even the protesters who are kept a safe distance from the FleetCenter seem anemic in comparison to past affairs when anti-war and civil-rights activists flocked to Chicago and New York and Miami to make themselves heard over the hoopla of the party's official machinery. Those opposing the Iraq invasion shouted their disapproval at John Kerry not because he has taken a positive stance for it, but because he has not spoken out firmly against it.

Inside the house built to accommodate this city's beloved basketball Celtics, the enthusiasm rivals even that of the fans in the salad days of Bill Russell and Larry Bird. Only the banners have been changed from their Irish green to the red-white-and-blue bunting of a different sort of patriotism. Missing are the disparate groups that in the past have given the party's gathering more the look of a mental institution than a nominating convention.

But it was on the podium where the

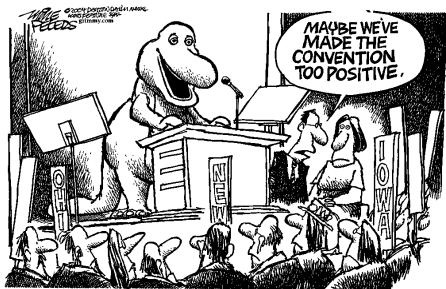
love and peace — almost an oxymoron when it comes to Democrats — prevailed at the highest level.

From Jimmy Carter — everyone's favorite ex-president — to Bill Clinton, newly ailing and fit and as charismatic as ever and introduced by Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton, the theme was the same: Just stick together with Kerry and his running mate, John Edwards, and the White House will once again be yours.

The message has been greeted repeatedly by thunderous demonstrations of exaltation from the delegates, who have no real official duty other than to endorse a ticket already chosen by the primary system. Only 2003's loser, then-Vice President Al Gore, sounded out of sync, whining repeatedly about his own misfortune. His early position on the opening night coiffed his stance in the party.

Yet in all of this there seemed to be some of the little boy whistling for courage in the dark. While political loudmouths such as James Carville were calling the incumbent president "toad," and the atmosphere was one of "it's all over but the shouting," the latest polls show George W. Bush's numbers improving somewhat. More importantly, Kerry still hasn't benefited much from Bush's low ratings, indicating that the vast majority of voters still aren't yet in the November mode.

The party's poll watchers realize that, for all their bravado, the election still is Bush's to win or lose, and that when the undecideds who will make the difference finally conclude whether to give him another four years, those who answer that question negatively will find themselves on the defensive. It will be up to Kerry to make certain that his campaign until this point doesn't produce any major faux pas, if



that is possible.

In that vein, there clearly will be a concerted effort to control the natural inclinations of Kerry's wife, Teresa Heinz Kerry, a task that may be beyond the senator's aides or anyone else. Heinz Kerry has a reputation for outspokenness that was manifested in her telling a newspaper questioner to "shove it" when he asked her to explain a word she had used. The Boston Herald dredged up a quote from a 1975 book in which she reportedly described Kerry's main ally, Sen. Edward Kennedy, as a bastard and also disparaged the Democratic Party generally. Of course, she was married to a conservative Republican in those days.

If the past has any relevance at all in this affair, Kerry should receive a healthy

bounce in the polls coming out of the euphoria of the convention despite the lack of prime-time coverage by the major broadcast networks. The trick will be to sustain it through what normally is a dark period between the end of this pep rally and the Republican one late next month. That increase could be sustained by a large expenditure on national advertising. Although the ticket got less of a boost from the naming of Edwards than expected (only about 4 percent), Kerry's managers are hoping to vastly improve on that with his prime-time acceptance speech.

Meanwhile, the love and kisses will continue at least on the surface, sustained by a party base that appears to despise Bush more than even Richard Nixon.

Dan Thomasson is former editor of the San Francisco News Service.

Bryant case shows rape shield laws have issues

By PAUL CAMPOS

The latest developments in the Kobe Bryant case raise some hard questions about rape shield laws. It would have been a travesty if Judge Terry Ruckelshage had refused to admit credible evidence that Bryant's accuser had consensual sex with two other men within 48 hours of her encounter with Bryant, especially given the defense claim that one of these encounters took place in the 15 hours between the alleged assault and her subsequent medical examination.

Colorado's rape statute limited Bryant's defense to arguing that this evidence should be admissible because it provides a plausible alternative explanation for any physical injury to the accuser, i.e., that such injury was a product of three consensual sexual encounters taking place over a short time, rather than of a sexual assault.

The real defense argument, of course, is that the accuser is sexually promiscuous, and often engages in the behavior the defense claims took place.

The standard justification for rape shield laws is that defense attorneys shouldn't be allowed to put the accuser's sex life on trial. Here's a question we ought to begin asking: Why not? Why shouldn't a trial about sex include relevant evidence about sex? There are basically three answers to that question. The good one goes like this: If the defense is allowed to introduce the accuser's sexual history, then there's a serious risk that a jury may refuse to convict a defendant that the jury believes is guilty, if the accuser happens to be promiscuous, because juries may punish sexually promiscuous accusers by not protecting them against rape.

This is — or at least was — a good argument, because there's little doubt this sort of "jury nullification" was common in the days before rape shield laws. The question we should be asking today is, given the gradual shift in social attitudes toward sexual sex, is the risk of this sort of jury misconduct still sufficiently strong to justify keeping potentially compelling evidence out of court?

The bad arguments for rape shield statutes are that the accuser's sexual history isn't relevant to whether she consented to sex in the context of an alleged assault, and that allowing past sexual conduct into evidence will keep victims from coming forward, because of their fear of public embarrassment.

Nothing illustrates the ideological distortion that surrounds rape law better than the former argument. It is, in a word, preposterous.

Consider the Bryant case, which appears to be a classic "he said, she said" scenario. The defense claim is that Bryant and the accuser engaged in casual, consensual sex — a claim that, considering Bryant's celebrity, as well as the lifestyles of various NBA stars and the women who cater to those lifestyles, seems plausible on its face.

Given this, what could possibly be more relevant to Bryant's defense than whether his accuser has a history of engaging in casual sexual encounters? Imagine if Bryant's accuser had been a virgin, but a statute prohib-

ited the prosecution from pointing this out to the jury. That, in reverse, is the position rape shield laws put defendants in when they bar the defense from introducing evidence regarding accusers' sexual histories.

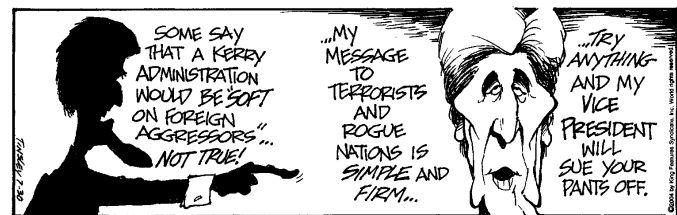
As for the argument that allowing past sexual conduct into evidence will keep accusers from coming forward, it's an odd claim that treats an accuser's potential embarrassment as a more weighty concern than the risk of sending an innocent man to prison for the rest of his life.

There's no question that, a generation ago, rape law was in need of fundamental reform. Today, the question is whether that reform itself needs reforming.

Paul Campos is a law professor at the University of Colorado in Boulder.

Mallard Fillmore

By BRUCE TINSLEY



Good deed done

IA DES MOINES — Imagine finding \$20,000. Now imagine not keeping it.

That's the story of Tim Titterton and his son, Dylan.

It happened after the Fourth of July weekend as Titterton, 48, and Dylan, 16, were headed to their farm outside Milford.

"A semi drove past, and it looked like confetti flying around," Titterton said.

It was \$20 bills and receipts from the wallet of Jody Gardner, 54, of Omaha, Neb.

Gardner and her sisters had just closed their dead father's bank accounts. Gardner's share totaled about \$20,000 in cashiers' checks and \$1,000 in cash and coins. She stuffed it all in her billfold.

On the trip back to the family home on Lake Okoboji, Gardner stopped to buy groceries in Milford. She drove off with the billfold on the roof of the van.

Titterton and his son said they spent about an hour tracking down checks, cash and everything else that had flown out of Gardner's billfold.

Back home, Dylan Titterton found an emergency contact number among the contents. The Tittertons reached a friend of Gardner's, who gave them directions to the lake home.

Dylan found Gardner on a dock behind the house. He asked her if she'd lost her billfold.

"I had no idea," she said. "It was an absolute miracle for me."

She offered the Tittertons a \$100 reward; they refused.

Police use-of-force study

RI PROVIDENCE — For the first time, police are tracking how officers use force as the department expands use of nonlethal options. This year, Providence police officers have used verbal threats, pepper spray or gunfire 338 times in 92,000 calls. Police are already using retractable batons and soon will have stun guns.

Man is dog's best friend

ND FARGO — When a 3-year-old chocolate Labrador retriever named Maddy got tangled in a 10-foot rope securing a trampoline floating on a lake, owner Matt Tollefson dove in after her.

When he dragged the dog's lifeless body out, Tollefson again didn't hesitate.

Her eyes were open and her tongue hung to the side of her mouth.

Tollefson performed CPR.

She's part of the family, "Tollefson said. "If she's going to go, she wasn't going to go like that."

Tollefson alternated compressions on Maddy's chest and blowing air in through her snout.

Tollefson said he took a first responders course in college but is not sure how he knew to blow air through her nose. He said he may have seen it on TV.

Two minutes into it, Maddy showed signs of life.

A veterinarian the next day diagnosed Maddy with aspiration pneumonia and a chest fracture in her shoulder from the compressions.

The dog is a little swollen and is taking two steam baths a day to help her recovery. She also is on an-



AMERICAN ROUNDUP

tibiotics.

"Maybe she doesn't, but it seems like she looks at me differently," Tollefson said.

Emergency health funds

NV LAS VEGAS — Gov. Kenny Guinn authorized an additional \$289,300 to help Clark County deal with a public health emergency prompted by overcrowded emergency rooms. The allocation is the third in as many weeks since Clark County officials declared the health emergency. A high number of mentally ill patients have overwhelmed area emergency rooms.

Burglars foiled

FL OVIEDO — Janice Gentry is not to be trifled with.

When four suspected burglars tried to make off with her belongings, Gentry and her sons outfoxed them by fashioning a tripwire out of a fishing line and blocking the suspects until authorities arrived and arrested them, deputies said. Burglars struck Gentry's Oviedo home Saturday afternoon, loading her belongings into her Ford Explorer and searching for another vehicle when it didn't all fit in the SUV, according to the Seminole County Sheriff's Office. They tried to steal the neighbor's van but were scared off, deputies said.

Officials say the burglars left, intending to return later that night.

Gentry returned home, found her things loaded in her Explorer

and alerted the sheriff's office.

The burglars returned about 3 a.m. Sunday and tried to drive off in the Explorer.

By then, Gentry and her two sons had tied a fishing line from her bumper to a bicycle in the garage, and the bicycle came crashing down and alerted Gentry and her sons.

The woman and her sons blocked the driveway with their cars to prevent any escape, said Steve Olson, spokesman for the sheriff's office.

Suspects Whitney D. Davis, 24, Reginald M. Hudson, 19, Patrick Doreus, 19, and Geraldo Rivera, 16, were charged with burglary, larceny, loitering and prowling. Davis was charged with car burglary and petty theft.

Police school reopens

MI LANSING — The 10 recruits at the Michigan State Police Training Academy comprise the first class to come through the academy in four years. With no money to hire new officers, the state watched as the state trooper ranks dropped to 1,040, the lowest in 35 years. This year, despite an ongoing budget crunch, the legislature allocated \$2.5 million to reopen the training school.

Boy bitten by shark

TX FREEPORT — An 11-year-old Freeport boy who was attacked by a shark remained hospitalized in guarded condition.

The unidentified boy was bitten on the arm and leg by a shark Sunday night at Bryan Beach on the Gulf of Mexico, firefighters said.

The boy's parents took him to a Freeport fire station where emergency officials determined that his injuries probably would require surgery in Houston, Deputy Fire Chief Chris Motley said. He was then flown by helicopter to Memorial Hermann Children's Hospital.

Motley, who is chief of emergency medical services, said the boy had been wide fishing for trout with his family. He was carrying a bag of the day's catch when he was bitten three times — once on the right arm and above and below his right knee.

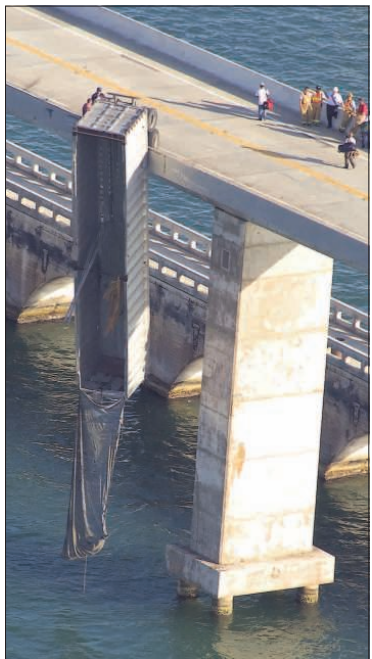
Court database backlog

ME PORTLAND — Judges may not know some defendants' criminal backgrounds when their cases go to court because only 10 percent of Maine's criminal records are entered into the state's computer database. Officials said the backlog in getting criminal records on the state's 2-year-old database may especially endanger domestic violence victims. Almost half of the state's murders are domestic homicides.

Priest paying for school

ND SYKESTON — The Rev. Loudon-Hans Flisk is trying to keep the local school from closing by opening his pocketbook.

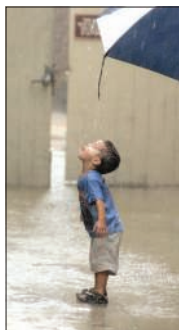
The Roman Catholic priest, who is also a member of the school board, has given bonuses to teachers with his own money and offered to pay a Sykeston student not to enroll in another district.



Holding on by its wheels A portion of a tractor-trailer dangles off the Channel 2 bridge on the Florida Keys' Overseas Highway, near Islamorada, following an accident with a disabled vehicle. The tractor portion of the rig remained on the bridge. One person was hospitalized.



Will they do a crawl stroke? Kemp's ridley sea turtles make their way to the water during a turtle release at the Padre Island National Seashore in Texas. In the largest release of Kemp's ridley sea turtles in Texas history, 349 hatchlings were released.



What umbrella?

Two-year-old Jack DiCarlantonio, of Doylestown, Pa., enjoys the rainy weather during the city's Youth Arts Thang.

Horoscope

With the morning's moon in Capricorn and the evening's moon in Aquarius, the day and night are as different from each other as, well, day and night. Ambitions are put into motion early on, and then, when the sun goes down, you won't want to even think about such trivial things as work. An excited tension builds toward tomorrow's full moon.

TODAY'S BIRTHDAY

(July 30). This is a stellar year for your financial picture — wins here affect the rest of your life, giving you a feeling of security and self-sufficiency. Your love life improves in August when you ask loved ones what they need — and supply it. Career-wise, you get back on track in September. Singles meet at parties in November. Sagittarius or Cancer love is best.

ARIES (March 21-April 19). There's no need to feel that you don't have enough. Be pro-active instead — ask for the money, and get it.

Reading and music are good for your soul. The more you learn, the more interesting tonight's date will be.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20). You are so rational in your dealings with loved ones that they may start to feel you do not care. Work on demonstrating the depth of your emotion. Challenges in sports give you the motivation to get in better physical shape.

GEMINI (May 21-June 21). You're thinking ahead all along the way, especially when others aren't. Keep a written record of your thoughts — later, this will be a treasure of wisdom. A flirtation grows more intense. Question your own motives.

CANCER (June 22-July 22). You're popular because you keep the well-being of others in mind. Put much thought and preparation into your work. You could hit the jackpot by communicating a fantastic idea to the one who can put it into practice.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22). Look for the media and human interest in your day — you'll be repeating the story tonight on an eager audience.

Tonight, your deep need for love and intimacy is featured. The right person is someone who will cherish and adore you.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22).

You're driven to do all the good you can with your current means. You'll even make efforts to expand your resources for doing good. Tonight, though you know the habits that should be avoided, it's still hard to steer clear.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 23). You learn quickly and well today. Your work becomes marvelous when you add a few new skills or refine some that you already have. Make an effort to train your spontaneous nature and build your library of general knowledge.

SCORPIO (Oct. 24-Nov. 21). The importance of enthusiasm is stressed. Consider communication training. It's a perfect day for adding richness and versatility to your vocabulary — being confident in your word choice is a sign of personal power.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21). Others may envy the love you've got in your life, but you know that relationships don't happen by luck.

You work diligently. You feed your relationships with new experiences, so they burn on like an eternal flame.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19). Off-the-wall ideas are not the norm for you, but an air of whimsy takes over, and you're uncharacteristically kooky. A loving partner is just what you need to ground you. Together, you find solutions for today's strange problems.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18). You've got it, and you flaunt it. Why not? Social skills are in rare form. You've got shopping luck this afternoon in that you can find bargains — still, best savings come from not spending at all.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20). You're a teacher and a healer — others look to you and expect you to know the answers. Be patient with a teen; learning and change happen in time. Be careful not to boast or exaggerate tonight.

Creators Syndicate

Joyce Jillson



Calvin and Hobbes



Jump Start



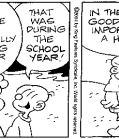
Zits



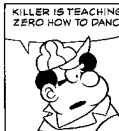
Cathy



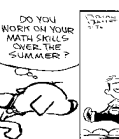
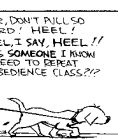
Hi and Lois



Beetle Bailey



Red and Rover



Better or Worse



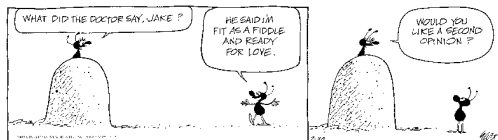
Peanuts



Fox trot



B.C.



Baby Bites



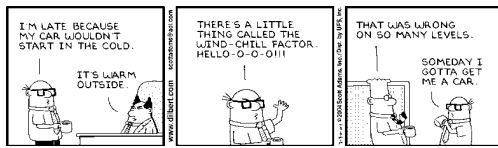
Spider Man



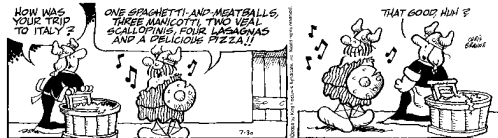
Blondie



Dilbert



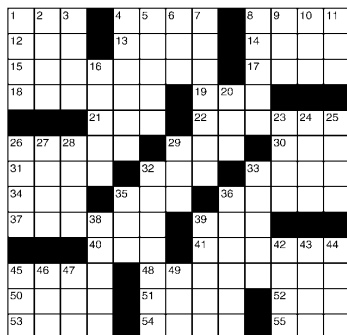
Hagar



Garfield



Eugene Sheffer Crossword



Across

- 1 Autumnal abbr.
- 4 Obsessed seaman
- 8 Urban blight
- 12 Squabble
- 13 "Damn Yankees" vamp
- 14 Almost black
- 15 Theater district
- 17 Physical
- 18 Was fresh
- 19 Praiseful piece
- 21 Holler
- 22 Variety of spruce
- 26 Bye word?
- 29 Command to
- 30 "Hail, Caesar!"
- 31 Credit-card payment
- 32 Illustrations
- 33 Entreaty
- 34 Parisian pal
- 35 Keglers' org.
- 36 Snag
- 37 1942 battle site
- 39 Weed killer?
- 40 Type squares
- 41 Unbroken
- 45 John/Rice collaboration
- 48 Our galaxy
- 50 Astigmatism effect
- 51 Staffer
- 52 Bobby of hockey
- 53 Sate
- 54 Deceptive one
- 55 Zodiac sign

Down

- 1 Scepters' topers
- 2 Dagwood's boss' wife
- 3 Noah's passenger list
- 4 Birches' kin
- 5 Informal greeting
- 6 Miss. neighbor
- 7 Rifle attachment
- 8 Villainous look
- 9 Upper limit
- 10 Eggs
- 11 Workout venue
- 16 Broad scarf
- 20 Obedience school student
- 23 Cartoonist Kelly
- 24 Opposite of "sans"
- 25 "OK"
- 26 Eden exile
- 27 Actress Moore
- 28 Footnote abbr.
- 29 Shape shifter?
- 32 Immeasurably poor
- 33 Devoutness
- 35 Shriver of tennis
- 36 Goose, at times
- 38 "... pondered, weak and —"
- 39 Germanic woman's name
- 42 MP's quarry
- 43 Give a hoot
- 44 Novice
- 45 "The View" network
- 46 Indisposed
- 47 Pair
- 49 Midafternoon on a sundial

Answer to Previous Puzzle



7-30

CRYPTOQUIP

SNZP QZKXDZPJ E WQZXPHL
FMZDE SGBQE Z FHFQHLZQ
WMGWNP BXJ? RGM-KHLZN.

GR LGBMXJ!

Yesterday's Cryptoquip: ARE YOU SAYING YOU DON'T NEED HELP PUTTING ON YOUR FANCY CLOTHES? SUIT YOURSELF!

Today's Cryptoquip Clue: M equals R

Child alters sleep arrangements

Dear Abby: My husband, "Rick," and I have a 4-year-old daughter, "Carmelle." When I brought Carmelle home from the hospital, she slept in a crib in our bedroom and I'd bring her to bed with me for midnight breast feedings so I could sleep.

Since then, Carmelle has refused to sleep in her own bed. I placed a child bed next to ours in our bedroom, and each night I'd tuck her in. But she would cry, so Rick would let her climb into ours. For the past year, The situation is now bordering on the ridiculous. I often wonder why I bothered to have my tubes tied.

Carmelle has a room of her own that I recently furnished, but she refuses to use it. I now sleep alone in our king-sized bed. That's because I told Rick I didn't want her wetting in my bed any longer. I thought a brand-new bedroom set with a

twinn-sized bed would encourage Carmelle to sleep in her room and Rick to sleep with me.

Have you any advice for me? — **Abandoned in Palm Bay, Fla.**

Dear Abandoned: Take your daughter to her pediatrician for an examination to determine

why she's still wetting the bed. There are medications and devices that can help her—but first you must determine what's causing the problem.

Once that's done, it's time for you and your husband to have a heart-to-heart about why he's sleeping with his daughter instead of his wife. If necessary, have it in a marriage counselor's office.

Dear Abby: My friend "Sheila" is going through a rough divorce. She called one night and told me she was going to kill herself. When I tried to calm her and talk her out of it, she hung

up on me. I tried calling her back for about 10 minutes. Then, fearing she had injured herself, I called the police.

She was taken to the hospital and released, and now she's mad at me. Sheila says I overreacted — she wasn't really going to do it — and that it's my fault she got bruised from the encounter. (It was storming and windy, and they fell in the mud.) I did what I was always taught to do in a situation like that. Did I do something wrong?

— **Needs to Know in Indiana**

Dear Needs to Know: No, you did exactly the right thing.

By now, you must have realized that your friend is self-centered, overly dramatic and brought this episode upon herself. Divorces can make people hyperemotional and irrational. Once Sheila gets her feet back on the ground, I hope she realizes what a good friend you are. If she doesn't, the loss is hers.

Letters for this column — with your name and phone number — should be addressed to Dear Abby, P.O. Box 69400, Los Angeles CA 90069. Readers can write to Abby on the Internet at <http://www.ueexpress.com/dearabby>. Universal Press Syndicate

Dear Abby



JUMBLE

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

REBBI

□ □ □ □ □

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NIROY

□ □ □ □ □

ENCLAG

□ □ □ □ □

NUPWOT

□ □ □ □ □

Answer: THE "□ □ □ □ □"

Yesterday's

Jumbles: PRIOR BURLY ACCEDE GAMBO

Answer: When the struggling artist didn't sell his work, he said it was — HIS "BLUE" PERIOD

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

by Henri Arnold and Mike Argirin



WHAT THE DEEP THINKER FOCUSED ON WHEN HE BOUGHT A LARGE-SCREEN TV.

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

Answer: THE "□ □ □ □ □"

(Answers tomorrow)

Strip clubs a hot topic for wives

Dear Annie: Your response to "Disgusted in California" disgusts me. She was upset that her husband might attend a bachelor party at a strip club, and she threatened to go to a bar in retaliation. You said, "A wife needs to decide if she trusts her husband or not. One night spent looking at naked women is not going to hurt a healthy marriage." Baloney! I am sickened by the way men and women take their marriage vows so lightly.

I do trust my husband. I trust that he will not attend a party where the groom has a last fling with a beautiful woman. If he steps into a strip club, it says his future wife is not good enough for him.

— **Disgusted in Virginia**

Dear Virginia: We heard from plenty of readers on this one. Read on.

From Chicago: I was a waitress in a strip club, and it infuri-

ates me that women who have never been to such a place think they know exactly what happens in one. "Disgusted" should check local city ordinances, which often prohibit total nudity in clubs and don't allow the women to be touched. The women working at these clubs are not romantically interested in the patrons. They are there to work.

Allowing your husband to go to a strip club is harmless. The only way something bad will happen is if Hubby has bad intentions, which, of course, is a different problem.

Riverside, Calif.: "Disgusted" should put her foot down and tell her husband this bachelor party is definitely a NO GO. It's not about trust; it's about respect for her feelings. He should stay home with a live naked woman — his wife.

Denver: Once every few months, I go to a strip club with

my husband. He enjoys watching the dancers, and I get the benefit of his enjoyment. At least her husband is honest about going. Many men lie to their wives about attending strip clubs because they know their wives would be angry. It doesn't stop them, though.

East Coast: That woman has several problems that need to be addressed by a doctor or counselor. She may have an anxiety disorder, and she obviously has control issues. This woman should seek therapy and medication. She is dealing with near-crippling insecurities.

Post Falls, Idaho: Why should a husband or a wife want to do anything that is likely to cause discomfort to their spouse? The man is a clod in my opinion, and needs to grow up and treat his wife with the respect and consideration she deserves.

Annie's Mailbox is written by Kathy Mitchell and Marcy Sugar, longtime editors of the Ann Landers column. Please email your questions to annie@mailbox.com, or write to: Annie's Mailbox, c/o Creators Syndicate, 5777 W. Century Blvd., Suite 700, Los Angeles, CA 90045. Creators Syndicate

Annie's Mailbox



Family Circus



"Stop eating 'tato chips, Jeffy. We're tryin' to hear the river."



Dennis the Menace



© Gary Larson

The Far Side

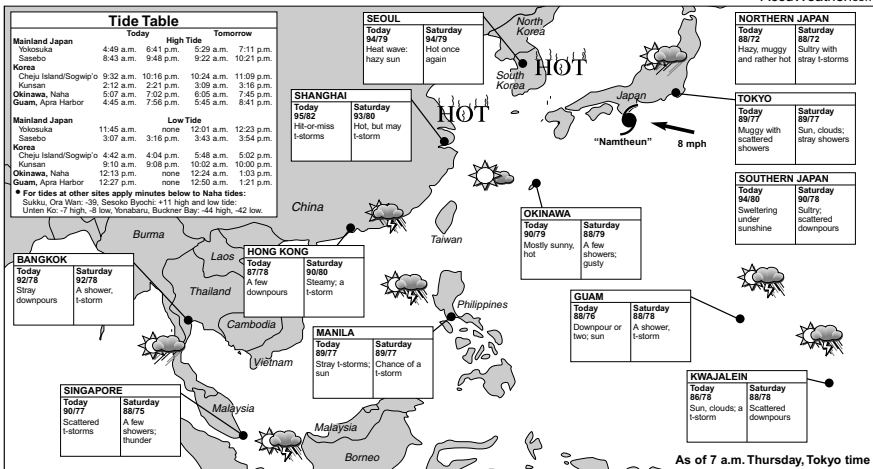


Non Sequitur



The Pacific Forecast

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Extended Forecasts

TOKYO

Sunday: Periods of clouds and sunshine, high 83, low 72.
Monday: Mostly cloudy, high 82, low 72.

KADENA

Sunday: Showers, high 86, low 77.
Monday: Showers, high 86, low 77.

SEOUL

Sunday: Thundershowers, high 90, low 72.
Monday: Mostly cloudy, high 89, low 73.

MANILA

Sunday: Thunderstorms, high 89, low 77.
Monday: Thundershowers, high 87, low 77.

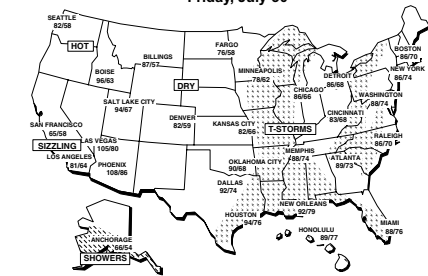
HAGATNA

Sunday: Thunderstorms, high 90, low 78.
Monday: Thunderstorms, high 90, low 78.

Wednesday's USA Temperatures

CITY	HIGHLOW	CITY	HIGHLOW
Albuquerque	87/61	Los Angeles	80/63
Amarillo	83/60	Little Rock	84/58
Anchorage	83/60	Louisville	87/59
Asheville	81/64	Miami	87/59
Baltimore	90/68	Milwaukee	81/65
Birmingham	84/66	Nashville	84/64
Boston	75/59	New York	78/63
Boise	84/62	Omaha	83/64
Boston	74/65	Orlando	81/67
Brownsville	78/59	Philadelphia	78/58
Buffalo	87/61	Phoenix	107/61
Burlingame	94/79	Pittsburgh	84/70
Charleston, SC	91/75	Portland, OR	90/62
Charlotte	87/69	Portland, ME	87/60
Chicago	87/61	San Lake City	91/69
Columbus, OH	76/62	St. Louis	85/65
Duluth	73/56	San Antonio	94/77
El Paso	91/58	San Diego	74/64
El Paso	91/58	San Juan	89/65
Helena	81/64	Tampa	89/67
Indianapolis	82/62	Tulsa	79/61
Jacksonville	89/73	Washington	79/65
Kansas City	88/63	Wichita	79/65

Friday, July 30



U.S. Extended Forecast

A front along the East Coast will keep clouds and showers over parts of the Carolinas and northern Georgia Friday. Afternoon showers and thunderstorms will occur in parts of Florida. Another cold front stretching from Michigan to Texas will bring showers and thunderstorms with it. Minnesota and the Dakotas will be cool. An upper-level disturbance will produce showers and thunderstorms in Nebraska and Kansas. A ridge aloft building over the West will promote warmer air over the Rockies and the Pacific Northwest. Low clouds and fog will form along the Southern California coast. Saturday, the ridge in the West will continue to produce hot air over the Rockies.

Friday's Pacific Temperatures

CITY	HIGH/LOW	CITY	HIGH/LOW	CITY	HIGH/LOW
Bangkok	92/78	Iwakuni	94/78	Sasebo	92/80
Beijing	84/70	Kadena AB	90/79	Sapporo	88/72
Camr Caspy	93/75	Kunsan AB	90/78	Seoul	94/79
Hiroshima	84/70	Kwajalein	89/78	Shanghai	90/78
Diego Garcia	83/76	Manila	89/77	Singapore	90/77
Hagatna	88/76	Misawa AB	85/72	Sydney	84/66
Hanoi	86/76	Osan	95/76	Taegu	94/77
Hong Kong	87/78	Perth	62/48	Taipei	91/75
		Pusan	89/77	Tokyo	88/77

Friday's World Temperatures

CITY		HIGHLOW	CITY	HIGHLOW	CITY	HIGHLOW	
Acapulco	91/77	Budapest	73/52	Kabul	96/61	Nairobi	77/51
Athens	83/65	Buenos Aires	60/45	Kiev	77/57	New Delhi	92/77
Auckland	84/41	Cairo	103/70	Kuwait	114/82	Oslo	75/58
Baghdad	117/84	Cancun	86/73	London	75/50	Paris	80/61
Barcelona	91/76	Cape Town	72/54	Manila	71/53	Rio de Janeiro	84/64
Barcelona	77/66	Geneva	80/65	Mexico City	72/54	Rome	80/61
Berlin	79/62	Istanbul	79/61	Montreal	87/68	St. Petersburg	73/50
Bermuda	98/76	Jerusalem	90/68	Mogadishu	87/71	Stockholm	63/53
Bombay	91/77	Los Angeles	91/77	Moscow	87/71	Tokyo	80/61



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SCOREBOARD

AFN schedule

Times listed are Japan and Korea Standard time. Guam is one hour ahead; Singapore and Hong Kong are two hours ahead. Schedule subject to change without notice.

Television

AFN-Pacific/AFN-Korea
SAT, July 31, at 10 a.m. — Pro boxing: Emmett Linton vs. Abe, Bumen for the WBC light-middlesweight title.

AFN-Atlantic

FRU, July 30, at 9 a.m. — Pro baseball: Oakland vs. Texas.

AFN-Sports

FRU, July 30, at 10 a.m. — Pro golf: U.S. Senior Open, first round.

FRU, July 30, at 8:30 a.m. — Pro tennis: ATP Masters Series Canada.

FRU, July 30, at 11 a.m. — Women's pro basketball: Los Angeles vs. Sacramento.

FRU, July 30, at 4 p.m. — Pro PGA Tour: Buick Open, first round.

FRU, July 30, at 8 p.m. — Pro Track and field: U.S. Open, second round.

FRU, July 30, at 9 p.m. — Pro baseball: Chicago vs. Detroit.

SAT, July 31, at 11 a.m. — Women's pro basketball: Los Angeles vs. Sacramento.

SAT, July 31, at 2 p.m. — Pro tennis: ATP Masters Series Canada, 1st round.

SAT, July 31, at 5 p.m. — Pro golf: U.S. Senior Open, second round.

SAT, July 31, at 11 a.m. — Pro baseball: St. Louis vs. San Francisco.

SAT, July 31, at 4 p.m. — Pro PGA Tour: Buick Open, second round.

SAT, July 31, at 7 p.m. — Pro baseball: Boston vs. Minnesota.

Pro soccer

Major League Soccer

Eastern Conference			
	W	L	Pct
MetroStars	7	5	.583
Columbus	5	6	.450
San Jose	2	2	.500
Chicago	4	7	.364
New England	8	8	.500
Western Conference			
	W	L	Pct
Los Angeles	9	6	.600
Portland	5	3	.625
Colorado	6	5	.545
Dallas	5	2	.714
San Jose	6	5	.545
San Diego	5	6	.455

NOTE: Three points for victory, one point for tie.

Wednesday's games
Dallas at Columbus
MetroStars at Kansas City
Chicago at Colorado

Saturday's game
All-Star Game at Washington

Pro basketball

WNBA

EASTERN CONFERENCE			
	W	L	Pct
New York	11	5	.688
Connecticut	12	3	.800
Charlotte	11	5	.688
Indiana	12	3	.800
Detroit	11	5	.688
Washington	10	6	.625
WESTERN CONFERENCE			
	W	L	Pct
Los Angeles	17	7	.708
Seattle	18	6	.750
Minnesota	13	5	.727
Phoenix	12	6	.667
Sacramento	11	12	.476
Houston	11	14	.440
Portland	12	13	.480

Tuesday's games
Houston RS, Seattle vs. Portland

Wednesday's games
Detroit at Washington
Charlotte at Indiana

Thursday's games
San Antonio at Minnesota
Los Angeles at Sacramento

Interservice

Japan football
USFJ-AFL

	W	L	Pct
Yokota	3	0	1.000
Atsugi at Yokota, 6 p.m.	1	12	.778
Yokosuka	2	3	.400
Atsugi	1	2	.333

Saturday's games

Misawa at Yokosuka, 4 p.m.
Atsugi at Yokota, 6 p.m.

Sunday, Aug. 7

Yokosuka at Misawa, 2 p.m.
Yokosuka at Atsugi, 4 p.m.

Indiv. results

Baseball
James Coleman, Misawa
John Wilson, Yokosuka

Baseball
Will MacCallum, Yokosuka
Bruce Turner, Yokota

Baseball
Andre Rice, Misawa
Robert Christy, Yokosuka

Baseball
Mike Jackson, Misawa
Michael Wells, Yokota

Baseball
Xavier Reyes, Yokota
Bruce Turner, Yokota

Baseball
Ron Carmichael, Yokota
Robert Christy, Yokosuka

Baseball
Mike Jackson, Misawa
Michael Wells, Yokota

Baseball
Xavier Reyes, Yokota
Bruce Turner, Yokota

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Ron Carmichael, Yokota
Robert Christy, Yokosuka

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Michael Wells, Yokota

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Yokota	3	0	1.000
Atsugi at Yokota, 6 p.m.	1	12	.778
Yokosuka	2	3	.400
Atsugi	1	2	.333

Acra Classic

Tuesday
At La Costa Resort and Spa
Carlsbad, Calif.

Purse: \$1.5 million
First Round

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Okfor sprains ankle
in practice

The Associated Press

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. — Enkele Okafor's sprained ankle and Tim Duncan's absence from a practice put a spotlight on the U.S. Olympic team's lack of front-court depth.

"Yeah, I worry, but hopefully it's not anything real bad," coach Larry Brown said. "If it is, we've got to go to the [selection] pool."

X-rays on Okafor's right ankle were negative, and the former Connecticut star was to be re-evaluated Wednesday. He landed awkwardly and turned his ankle during a drill about an hour after practice began during the second day of the training camp.

Duncan fell at and had a slight fever, prompting trainers to have him skip the morning session of the team's two-day practices. He participated in the entire evening practice, a team spokesman said.

The absence of the two left power forwards Carlos Boozer and Amare Stoudemire as the only big men. Okafor is the U.S. team's only true center, although Duncan is expected to man that position for long stretches during the Olympics.

Even at full strength, the Americans will be at a disadvantage in terms of size and against several opponents, a deficiency that should be exposed the next two weeks in exhibition games against Russia, Italy, Germany and Serbia and Montenegro.

The U.S. team has several versatile players who can play versatile positions, but the Americans also have to use their guards Odom and/or Shawn Marion at power forward.

Changes can be made to the roster until 72 hours before the start of Olympic competition.

Washington watches

Milwaukee's offer for Thomas
WASHINGTON — Ethan Thomas will remain with the Washington Wizards.

General Manager Ernie Grunfeld said Wednesday the Wizards will match the six-year, \$36.6 million offer sheet Thomas signed with the Milwaukee Bucks on July 14.

The Wizards had until Thursday to match the offer sheet. "We said all along that we wanted to keep him," Grunfeld said. "He is an important part of what we intend to do."

Thomas has started 15 games in his NBA career, but the demand for physical big men made him attractive on the restricted free agent market. Thomas, 6-foot-10, plays forward and center, and his work ethic stands out in a Wizards franchise plagued in recent years by locker room squabbles.

Okur signs early with Jazz

SALT LAKE CITY — Mehmet Okur was very concise in his earliest moments as a member of the Utah Jazz.

"Life is good," Okur said with a wide grin after signing a six-year, \$50 million deal to join the Jazz.

Briefs

MBA

The Turkish center signed the deal Tuesday, three days short of the deadline the Detroit Pistons had set for matching the offer. But knowing they wouldn't be able to come up with the money, the Pistons let Okur go early.

The NBA champion Pistons instead signed Rashad Wallace, who went to Detroit in a midseason trade that cut into Okur's playing time. Okur still finished the season averaging 9.6 points and 5.9 rebounds.

Bulls sign Gordon, Deng

CHICAGO — The Chicago Bulls signed first-round draft picks Ben Gordon and Luol Deng on Tuesday.

Gordon, a 6-foot-3 guard out of Connecticut, was the third pick overall. He led the Huskies to the national title last season, averaging 18.5 points as a junior.

Deng, a 6-8 forward from Duke, was taken seventh overall by the Phoenix Suns and then traded to the Bulls on draft night for the 31st pick, a future first-round choice and cash.

The 21-year-old Gordon, who left Connecticut a year early, is the school's all-time leader with 1,301 points and nearly 300 rebounds and ranks 31st in points.

Deng left the Blue Devils after his freshman season when he averaged 15.1 points and nearly seven rebounds. He should give the team much-needed depth at the small forward position.

In other NBA news:

■ The New Jersey Nets signed seven-year center Nenad Krstic from Serbia to a three-year contract Tuesday, two years after he made his NBA debut. No. 1 pick in the 2002 draft.

■ The 24th pick two years ago, averaged 16.9 points and 6.6 rebounds last year with Partizan Belgrade, enduring a broken bone in his left wrist and his right knee. He will start for the Serbia-Montenegro team at the Athens Olympics.

■ The Indiana Pacers agreed to a two-year contract Tuesday with backup point guard Eddie Gill. Gill will make the league's minimum salary. He's third on the Pacers' depth chart behind starter Jamaal Tinsley and Anthony Johnson.

■ The Miami Heat signed draft pick Doreen Wright on Tuesday to a three-year contract totaling about \$3 million.

The 19th pick overall averaged 29 points and 14 rebounds per game at Connecticut's South Kent Prep last season and was widely considered one of the nation's top high school players.

■ The Charlotte Bobcats signed Michigan forward Bernard Robinson on Wednesday for the overall selection in the NBA Draft.

Terms of the deal were not released.

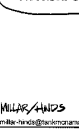
TANK McNAMARA

TO GOLDMEND, YOU MIGHT HAVE TO SET A WORLD RECORD SO YOU GET EXTRA-LEGAL DRUG SCREENING.



THEY'LL TEST EVERYBODY BEFORE AND AFTER THEIR LONG JUMPS.

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Raiders CB Woodson refuses to go to camp

The Associated Press

Three first-round draft choices signed with their NFL teams on Wednesday.

But Charles Woodson, Oakland's Pro Bowl cornerback, will stay out of camp in protest over being designated the team's "franchise player."

And the dangers inherent to the NFL became quickly apparent when Sean Taylor, who signed a multimillion dollar deal with the Washington Redskins on Tuesday, injured his right knee in his first practice.

Defensive tackle Tommie Harris, 14th overall pick in the draft, signed with Chicago linebacker D.J. Williams, No. 17, wide receiver and running back Kevin Jones, No. 30, with Detroit, which is still trying to sign its top pick, wide receiver Roy Williams, No. 7 overall. The Lions also signed line-backer Teddy Lehman, their second-round pick and the Bears signed wide receiver Bernard Berrian, their third-round.

The signings brought to 11 the number of first-round choices signed as the week of camp openings continued. The second overall pick, offensive tackle Robert Gallery, was reportedly close to a deal, but the Raiders denied that negotiations had been completed.

Taylor, who on Tuesday signed a seven-year, \$18 million deal with Washington, sprained his right knee making a play near the end of the morning practice of what the Redskins term a "voluntary" passing camp. Coach Joe Gibbs said he didn't think the injury was serious and an MRI confirmed that, turning up negative.

"It's the No. 1 fear you always have—the injury," Gibbs said. "So far, we've been kind of fortunate. Today it kind of bit me."

Woodson is one of six veterans controlled by the "franchise tag," which keeps free

NFL training camps

agents with their own teams. Unable to work out a long-term deal with the Raiders, he is under contract to play on a one-year deal that pays him \$8.8 million, the average of the salary of the league's top five cornerbacks.

By not signing, he's technically not on the roster and can't be fined for missing practice once the team starts training camp Friday in Napa.

Woodson, who's entering his seventh season, has said he wants a big-money long-term contract. Several stars have annually stayed out of camp as franchise players.

"I've not talked to him in a while," Raiders coach Norv Turner said Wednesday. "Charles is doing the things he has to do physically to get ready. ... I don't know how you judge to say it's going to be a long time or it's going to be soon. I'd like to have him soon, and hopefully we will."

Turner added that he doesn't expect Woodson to hold out all year. A call to Woodson's agent, Carl Poston, was not immediately returned Wednesday.

Poston also represents offensive tackle Orlando Pace of the Rams, another franchise player who is holding out. Linebacker Julian Peterson of San Francisco, who is represented by Poston's brother Kevin, also is expected to hold out as a franchise player.

None of the first-round picks represented by Poston and his brother have signed yet. —
 Tight end Kellen Winslow Jr. of Cleveland, wide receiver Reggie Williams of Jacksonville and cornerback Chris Gamble of Carolina. The Browns have begun talking with Kevin Poston, but the Panthers have been talking to Carl Poston about Gamble, but Carolina General Man-



Pro Bowl cornerback Charles Woodson is staying out of camp in protest over being designated the team's "franchise player." Under contract to play on a one-year deal for \$8.8 million, Woodson has said he wants a big-money, long-term contract.

ager Marty Hurley indicated on Wednesday that a deal wasn't close.

In another development Wednesday, veteran quarterback Steve Buehrlein was signed by Carolina, then retired as a Panther, for whom he holds every team passing record. Buehrlein, 39, last played for Denver and spent 17 seasons in the league.

On Tuesday, Philadelphia and Atlanta signed first-round picks. Former Arkansas

offensive lineman Shawn Andrews — the No. 16 pick — agreed to a six-year contract with the Eagles, and former Ohio State receiver Michael Jenkins — the No. 28 pick — also signed with the Falcons.

—
 Also, Brock Lesnar, known to World Wrestling Entertainment fans as "The New Big Thing," signed a contract with the Minnesota Vikings on Tuesday, hoping to win a roster spot as a defensive lineman.

Stripes: Having Kitna back as tutor eases transition

STRIPES FROM BACK PAGE

"Sometimes when you're young, more bad things happen than good," Palmer said, in an interview from his home in California.

Palmer will get most of the snaps in camp and play more than usual in preseason games, so he can get his timing with the offense. Maybe he can get some of those rookie mistakes out of the way early.

Lewis isn't about to make the infamous mistake that one of his predecessors made four years ago.

Heading into the 2000 season, coach Bruce Coslet told everyone that the Bengals would go only as far as inexperienced quarterback Aki Smith could take them. It was a short ride.

Smith couldn't handle the transition, Coslet quit after an 0-3 start and the Bengals had yet another dismal year. Smith never got a full season to prove himself and never panned out.

Lewis is taking the opposite approach with his young passer, making sure not to apply any such pressure.

"That's the last thing Marvin would say," Palmer said. "I'm a

smart enough guy to know that I'm not going to take this team anywhere. I have plenty of play-makers to get the ball to. I don't feel a need to carry this team on my shoulders."

If Palmer can just take it slow and limit the mistakes, Lewis figures the Bengals can hold their own despite a tough schedule that includes a Monday night appearance against the Denver Broncos.

If not, he can turn to Kitna.

"If one position causes us to lose games, we'll make a change," Lewis said.

Palmer has one uncommon asset. Kitna agreed to restructure his contract so he could stay as the backup, tutoring Palmer as he learns to play. Kitna was the team's leader last season, and his support for the move will go a long way in the locker room.

He two have talked frequently in the offseason.

"He's awesome," Palmer said. "He's a classy guy who doesn't let his ego get in the way or complain. He realizes his role, accepts it and tries to make the people around him better. There aren't many guys in this league like him."

A year from now, the Bengals hope they're saying the same thing about Palmer.

Jackson aboard for Rams camp

By R.B. FALLSTROM

The Associated Press

MACOMB, Ill. — Steven Jackson took the bus to work on Tuesday.

The St. Louis Rams first-round pick, criticized by his coach earlier this month after missing a rookie minicamp, showed up for training camp on the bus ridden by all the Rams first-year players.

Jackson, who signed a five-year, \$7 million contract on Sunday, and the rest of his fellow rookies arrived around 2:30 in the afternoon. They were well ahead of the 5 p.m. deadline that previous first-rounders tended to cut a lot closer, often showing up in shiny new vehicles.

"I'm a rookie," Jackson said with a laugh. "When I told my agent I was going to ride the bus he had the same response. He was 'You're going to ride the bus?' But I just wanted to get up there."

That was a good sign for coach Mike Martz, who reiterated that jobs must be won regardless of draft position when two-day workouts begin Wednesday. Jackson begins training camp fourth on the depth chart at tailback behind Marshall Faulk, Lamar Gordon and even Arlen Harris, who's being converted to fullback.

"Steven's like every other rookie," Martz said. "Whatever you

get, you earn. That's what this league is all about, and there was a misconception that he was going to come in and play right away because he's Steven Jackson."

Jackson is considered the heir apparent to Faulk, who is 31 years old and entering his 12th NFL season. Faulk will participate in only the afternoon practice of two-a-days, along with veteran safety Aeneas Williams, giving Jackson plenty of opportunity to carry the ball in training camp.

"This is a very competitive league, and he needs to come in and compete," Martz said. "My message to Steven was exactly that."

Jackson had another reason for taking the rookie bus: He didn't want to risk getting lost on the winding three-plus-hour drive, often on two-lane roads, to training camp.

"I've caused enough trouble over the last week," Jackson said. "That would be a little more news for you guys. So I figured I'd hop on the bus and it would be easier for me."

Jackson didn't appear overly concerned about Martz's criticism.

He wasn't at the camp because he had not signed a contract.

"Coaches want to set the tone," he said. "I think he was trying to play a little mind game with me. I

understand that he was coming from, but hopefully he understood where I was coming from."

Jackson hoped that riding the bus would help mend fences.

"We'll see what the marriage looks like," he said.

The only expected no-show for the start of camp was holdout offensive tackle Orlando Pace, designated by the Rams as their franchise player. Pace also was the franchise player last year and missed all of training camp.

"When Big O gets here, we'll love him to death," Martz said. "It's hard for coaches, but it's what it is, we're not going to change it and why worry about it."

"When he gets here we'll embrace him, and line him up and let's go."

The Rams are restricting defensive end Leonard Little, who faces a felony charge of persistent drunken driving in St. Louis County, to one group interview session per week on football issues only.

Little pleaded guilty to involuntary manslaughter in an alcohol-related wreck that killed a St. Louis woman in 1998.

"I think it's just fair to Leonard," Martz said. "Otherwise he'll just get hounded on some things. We just want to make sure everybody understands the guidelines, that everything is pertinent to football."

Yankees' power play jumps Yankees

Sheffield's 400th one of four HRs in N.Y.'s 7-4 win

The Associated Press

TORONTO — Gary Sheffield's 400th career home run helped the New York Yankees overcome the loss of another thirtysomething starter.

This time Orlando Hernandez left with a hamstring injury, but the Yankees hit four homers — including Jorge Posada's three-run shot in the eighth — to beat the Toronto Blue Jays 7-4 on Tuesday night.

Hernandez, 38, on the disabled list all last season with Montreal, was making his fourth start for the Yankees because Kevin Brown, 39, and Mike Mussina, 35, are on the disabled list.

Also, spot starter Tanyon Sturtze, 34, injured his right ankle in the brawl with Boston on Saturday and will miss his next scheduled outing.

"I don't even want to think about it. We've been lucky," manager Joe Torre said. "There's not a whole lot of skilled involved. We've been able to dance around this thing right now, but you certainly don't want to make a living doing that."

The Yankees kept winning, though, thanks mostly to home runs.

On Tuesday, Alex Rodriguez homered on his 29th birthday and Bernie Williams also connected to help New York push its major league-leading home total to 153.

Sheffield's homer in the ninth made it 7-2.

"This means everything because I never thought I'd reach 400 home runs," Sheffield said. "I was just hoping to get 100. When I came in the league they told me I'd be a speed guy. I'm thrilled to death to get this milestone."

Hernandez did not come out for the third inning because of tightness in his left hamstring.

"I didn't feel it before the game in the second inning. I felt it," Hernandez said. "I wanted to keep pitching but the manager said no."

El Duque thinks he'll be able to make his next start.

After being held to two hits by former teammate Ted Lilly and



Yankees pitcher Orlando Hernandez, above, left Tuesday's game after the second inning with tightness in his left hamstring. Starters Kevin Brown and Mike Mussina are also on the disabled list.

Kevin Frederick for seven innings, the Yankees scored four runs in the eighth.

New York loaded the bases against Kerry Ligtenberg (1-3). Justin Speier relieved and Rodriguez hit a sacrifice fly to tie it 2-2.

Posada followed with his 13th homer of the season, a night after hitting a grand slam.

Bernie Williams and Sheffield added solo homers off Michael Nakamura in the ninth. Sheffield passed Al Kaline for 38th on the career list.

Scott Proctor (1-0), the fifth of six Yankees pitchers, got two outs for his first major league victory, and Tom Gordon worked 1 2/3 innings for his third save despite allowing two runs in the ninth.

In other AL games Tuesday:

Angels 2, Rangers 0: Bartolo Colon combined with two relievers on a one-hitter, Jose Guillen and Robb Quinlan had RBIs and the host Angels won after the teams suffled during batting practice.

Colon (4-0) pitched seven innings of one-hit ball, and Troy Percival got his 29th career save.

The Rangers' Nick Regilio, making his first major league start, allowed two runs on five hits.

Before the game, a fight broke out between Angels second base-

man Adam Kennedy and Rangers catcher Gerald Laird, a carry-over from their dispute the previous night.

Laird thought Kennedy intentionally tried to get hit by a pitch with the bases loaded and two outs in the second inning of Texas' 6-1 victory Monday night, and said something to Kennedy when he came up in the fifth.

Kennedy was standing behind the batting cage Tuesday and was approached by Laird as the Angels were concluding batting practice and the Rangers were finishing their pregame stretching. Moments later, the two were in a tussle that spilled over to the warning track between home plate and the first base dugout.

Soon every player from each team was involved, with players pushing, shoving and grabbing each other before order was restored four minutes later.

"He kind of saw that I was making eye contact at him, and I expected a different response and a more cordial conversation than I got," Kennedy said. "It was a little misunderstanding that probably got a little out of control."

"Everything happened kind of fast, but there were no punches thrown by anybody. Nothing too serious came out of it and nobody was hurt. I don't know what's on his agenda, but as far as I'm concerned, it's over."

Laird had little to say before or after the game.

"He tried to forearm, sucker-punch me," Laird said.

Athletics 5, Mariners 3: Bobby Crosby and Eric Chavez homered, Mark Redman (7-8) won for the first time in six starts and the Athletics handed Seattle its 14th straight road loss, matching a club record.

Indians 10, Tigers 6: Coco Crisp, a late addition to the lineup, had his first career grand slam and drove in a career-high five runs for the host Indians.

Crisp hit his slam in the second inning off Gary Knotts (5-6) and added a RBI single in the fifth. He also saved at least one run with a leaping catch against the left-field wall.

Indiana starter C.C. Sabathia (7-5) allowed five runs and six hits with three walks in six in-

ning of days before they have everything they need," Torre said after Tuesday night's 7-4 victory over Toronto.

Torre spoke with General Manager Brian Cashman.

"Brian said we're going to have to wait for all the information before we make a decision," Torre said.

On Monday, Giambi played down a report that he was being checked for a parasite that can cause a potentially fatal condition. "We're not in a third-world country, so we have medication," he said.

Giambi's trainer, Bob Alejo, told the Newark Star-Ledger that

the All-Star first baseman is being tested for a dangerous parasite called *entamoeba histolytica*.

The 33-year-old Giambi has missed six of New York's past seven games, including Tuesday night. He is hitting .221 with 11 homers and 36 RBIs. The 2000 AL MVP, who did not start eight straight games from June 26 to July 4 because of the parasite, is hitless in his past 21 at-bats.

The Cubs again stared in Giambi's place at first base Tuesday night. Giambi is not expected to return to Toronto on Wednesday.

"Jesse doesn't feel like doing anything," Torre said. "It's not that he doesn't want to, it's just that he doesn't feel like it."



Anaheim catcher Jose Molina drops a pop-up hit on Tuesday night by Texas third baseman Hank Blalock, who reached first base on the play.

nings, but improved to 8-2 lifetime against Detroit.

Devil Rays 6, Royals 2: At St. Petersburg, Fla., Rocco Baldelli had an RBI double off losing pitcher Darrell May (7-11) and threw a runner out at the plate to help Tampa Bay end a six-game losing streak.

Twins 7, White Sox 3: Johan Santana (9-6) pitched two-hit ball into the seventh inning and surging Minnesota beat the White Sox in Chicago to take a 2 1/2-game lead in the AL Central.

Cristian Guzman had three hits, including a pair of doubles, and Corey Koskie was hit by a pitch three times to tie a major league record.

In Wednesday's early AL games:

Twins 5, White Sox 4 (10): Jacques Jones hit a go-ahead single in the top of the 10th inning after Chicago shortstop Jose Valentin dropped his foul pop up with two outs, and Minnesota completed a three-game sweep.

The Twins won for the 10th

time in 12 tries and moved 3 1/2 games ahead of the White Sox in the AL Central.

With the score 4-4, Chicago put runners at first and third with one out in the ninth. Joe Borchard hit a hard grounder that third baseman Corey Koskie gloved, and second baseman Michael Cuddyer made a tough turn for an inning-ending double play.

Athletics 3, Mariners 2: Mark Mulder earned his 14th victory when pinch-hitter Mark Kotsay singled home the winning run in the bottom of the ninth, and Oakland dealt Seattle its team-record 15th straight road loss.

The A's won their fifth in a row as Mulder (14-3) pitched his fifth complete game of the season.

Eric Byrnes hit a tying solo homer in the eighth off Seattle reliever Shigetoshi Hasegawa, then Julio Martez (1-2) gave up Kotsay's one-out hit that scored Seattle's Hattberg from second.

The Mariners lost 14 in a row on the road from May 21-June 21, 1998. Their last road win this year was June 20 at Pittsburgh.

Giambi's test results expected soon

The Associated Press

TORONTO — The New York Yankees will have to wait a little longer for test results that could explain why slugger Jason Giambi has been feeling weak.

Giambi has felt fatigued since early June because of an intestinal parasite. He was expected to receive test results Tuesday while meeting with Dr. Scott Hammer, an infectious disease specialist at Columbia-Presbyterian Medical Center in New York.

But manager Joe Torre said the team won't know more about Giambi's status until later this week. "I was told it's going to be a cou-

ple of days before they have everything they need," Torre said after Tuesday night's 7-4 victory over Toronto.

Torre spoke with General Manager Brian Cashman.

"Brian said we're going to have to wait for all the information before we make a decision," Torre said.

On Monday, Giambi played down a report that he was being checked for a parasite that can cause a potentially fatal condition. "We're not in a third-world country, so we have medication," he said.

Giambi's trainer, Bob Alejo, told the Newark Star-Ledger that

Ibis Tek

The Ibis Tek Ram Bumper attached to the front of the vehicle enables the HMMWV to easily push objects in its path without any damage being done to the front end. Without the Ram Bumper existing vehicle parts are easily damaged sometimes destroying the critical cooling components of the vehicle. With the Ram Bumper attached to the vehicle the HMMWV can easily "push" its way through barriers or other vehicles maliciously put in front of the HMMWV.

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Maddux's evening milestone one away from 299th win

The Associated Press

MILWAUKEE — Greg Maddux has always relied on efficiency. He's not wasting any time closing in on 300 wins, either.

The Chicago Cubs right-hander won his third consecutive start Tuesday night, earning career win No. 299 with a 7-1 victory in Milwaukee.



Maddux

Maddux, who began his career with the Cubs in 1986 and rejoined them last offseason, will try to become the 22nd major league pitcher to win 300 games when he faces the Phillies at Wrigley Field on Sunday.

"That would be great, to hopefully win 300 where he started," Chicago manager Dusty Baker said.

The 38-year-old Maddux would be the first National League to accomplish the feat since Philadelphia's Steve Carlton on Sept. 23, 1983.

Maddux (10-7) needed only 79

pitches to get through six innings and end the slumping Brewers, allowing one run and four hits. He struck out six and walked one in a game that lasted just 2 hours, 30 minutes.

But he shied away from the attention that will accompany his attempt to join the exclusive club. "It's not about me. It's about us doing what we can to get into the postseason," Maddux said. "Let's just stay focused on what we have to do as a team. The last thing that I want to be is just any kind of distraction."

Sammy Sosa hit his 21st homer and doubled in a run for Chicago.

Todd Walker also connected off Ben Sheets (9-8), who has received just one run of support from the Brewers' feeble offense in losing three straight.

Milwaukee ended its slump with runners in scoring position to 3-for-58 over the last eight games, including three losses. The Brewers were 0-for-3 Tuesday night.

"For me, an offensive slump is kind of like the flu," manager Ned Yost said. "It's miserable while you're going through it, but sooner or later you get over it."

NL Roundup

Maddux, 9-2 in his career against Milwaukee, got into trouble just once, when he loaded the bases in the first. But he got Brady Clark looking at strike three to end the inning.

Russell Branyan, acquired from Cleveland on Monday, sent Milwaukee's only big mistake. Aaron Lestak's only big mistake. 480 feet for a solo homer in the sixth.

Giants 6, Padres 4: Jason Schmidt (13-3) recovered from his worst outing of the season and pitched eight solid innings for the Giants in San Diego.

Dustin Mohr went 3-for-3 with a two-run homer for San Francisco, which ended a six-game skid against the Padres. Barry Bonds hit a two-run double in the first off David Wells (6-6).

Matt Herges escaped a bases-loaded, none-out jam in the ninth for his 23rd save.

Rockies 7, Dodgers 2: Aaron Cook (5-4) pitched into the eighth inning for his first home win in a year, and Jeremy Burnitz homered for the fifth straight home

game and drove in four runs.

Todd Helton and Todd Greene also connected for the Rockies, who ended Los Angeles' run of nine consecutive road wins — its longest. Odalis Perez (4-4) took the loss.

Pirates 8, Braves 4: Rob Mackowiak came around to score on a bizarre, bases-loaded double when Atlanta catcher Johnny Estrada made two errors on one play, and the Pirates rallied with a five-run seventh inning.

The comeback — Pittsburgh once trailed 3-0 — was the Pirates' third in four days at home and their 15th victory in their last 17 home games.

Atlanta's four-game winning streak ended along with J.D. Drew's 22-game hitting streak.

Marlins 5, Phillies 2: Mike Lowell hit a tiebreaking homer off Rheal Cormier (4-4) in the eighth inning. Miguel Cabrera had a two-run double and the Marlins set a franchise record for consecutive home victories against one opponent.

Philadelphia has lost 12 consecutive games in Miami, including five this year. Florida improved

to 9-1 against the Phillies this season and has won 21 of the past 24 meetings dating to last year.

Carl Pavano (11-4) allowed two runs in eight innings.

Cardinals 6, Reds 0: At Cincinnati, Jason Marquis (11-4) pitched seven stingy innings and hit a two-run double in his eighth straight win. Jim Edmonds and Reggie Sanders homered off Cory Lidle (6-9). The Reds' longest losing streak since May 26, going 8-0 with no decisions and a 2.90 ERA.

Astros 10, Diamondbacks 3: Adam Everett hit two of the Astros' season-high four homers, and Roy Oswalt (10-8) pitched two-hit ball for seven shutout innings. Jeff Bagwell had a three-run homer and Jeff Kent a two-run shot against visiting Atlanta, which snapped a 14-game losing streak Monday night.

Mets 4, Expos 2: Tom Glavine (8-8) got his first win since June 13. Mike Cameron hit a three-run homer off Zach Day (5-10) and New York ended its four-game losing streak with a victory at Olympic Stadium. Brad Wilkerson had a career-high four hits for the Expos, who had won a season-high five straight.

Pirates' Benson expects trade in next few days

By ALAN ROBINSON

The Associated Press

PITTSBURGH — Pittsburgh Pirates right-hander Kris Benson is going about his normal off-day routine, preparing for his next scheduled start Saturday.

The only question is what uniform he'll be wearing.

"Wherever it is, I'm preparing to pitch Saturday," Benson said.

Facing the Saturday deadline for trading without waivers, Pirates General Manager Dave Littlefield is sorting out offers and possible interest in perhaps the best starting pitcher available not named Randy Johnson.

Littlefield said keeping Benson is an option, but that doesn't seem realistic because Benson (8-4, 4.22 ERA) is unsigned past this season and probably will command much more money as a free agent than the Pirates can afford.

Despite the Pirates' improved play — they've won nine of 12 and 21 of 28 — Littlefield said they still have too many holes to fill short-term from their farm system. That also signals that a trade is almost a certainty.

"There are a lot of factors involved... If we do something, we've got to get pieces that make sense. There are only certain teams we fit with, and it's hard to say if it's going to be Tuesday or Saturday or if it's not going to happen," Littlefield said Tuesday before the Pirates' 8-4 victory over Atlanta.

Littlefield could choose to wait until the weekend, hoping that would increase the pressure on those contenders who haven't added pitching for the stretch drive. Conversely, he risks losing a player he might covet should a team lose patience and make another trade before Saturday.

Also, the Pirates don't have a pressing need financially to make a trade, as they did when they were forced to trade third baseman Aramis Ramirez and outfielder Kenny Lofton to Cubs a year ago.

Littlefield has declined to discuss specifics, although it is known that the Minnesota Twins, Anaheim Angels and New York Mets are interested in



Pirates starting pitcher Kris Benson heads for the dugout after the first inning against the Atlanta Braves on Monday in Pittsburgh. Benson will likely be in a new uniform when he pitches again.

Benson. Several days ago, the Twins told slumping first baseman Doug Mientkiewicz to expect a trade, and he would fill the Pirates' need for a corner infielder.

Mientkiewicz, 30, is hitting .238 with five homers and 23 RBIs, but has hit above .300 two of the last three seasons. He has long interested the Pirates, who see him up close during the teams' frequent spring training matchups.

Mientkiewicz's best season was 2001, when he hit .306 with 15 homers and 74 RBIs.

Because Benson could be a rent-a-player — there is no assurance he will stay with the team that lands him — the Pirates aren't likely to get as much back as they did from San Diego for outfielder Brian Giles. He was signed for an additional two seasons, thus increasing his market value when the Pirates dealt him in August.

But the Pirates still want a position player and another player who is close to being major-league ready for Benson, even if that prospect isn't as talented as left-hander Oliver Perez or outfielder Jason Bay, who were acquired for Giles.

"We do lack some position player options and at first base and third base, we don't have long-term options," Littlefield said.

"If we're going to do something, getting a position player makes sense."

For now, Benson can only wait.

"Looking around [Monday night], I knew it would be the last time I'd be with my teammates in the home dugout," Benson said.

Lingering ribcage injury forces Washburn to DL

The Associated Press

ANAHEIM, Calif. — The Anaheim Angels put left-hander Jarrod Washburn on the 15-day disabled list Tuesday and purchased outfielder Curtis Priddy's contract from Triple-A Salt Lake City.

Washburn, who leads the team with 10 wins, has an inflamed ligament in his left ribcage. He is 10-5 with a 4.38 ERA in 19 starts this season, with one shutout.

Washburn, 29, was placed on the DL retroactive to July 21.

"It just hasn't progressed at all," said Washburn, who became the 13th Angels player to go on the DL this season. "The discomfort's still there, so they wanted me to go on the DL instead of taking a chance of making it worse and having it bother me the rest of the year."

"It's not excruciating pain, but it's not comfortable feeling. They made me be honest with them and tell them if there was any discomfort, so I was honest this morning with one shutout."

Washburn first felt the problem during his previous start. He had X-rays and a CT scan on Monday, both of which were normal, and underwent a bone scan on Tuesday. He is eligible to be activated on Aug. 5.

"Right now we're very comfortable that he'll be able to get out there once his stint on the DL is up," manager Mike Scioscia said.

Priddy, 35, hit .431 with two homers and 10 RBIs in 19 games at Salt Lake. He started this season with the Nashua Devil of the independent Atlantic League.

Priddy, who is almost totally deaf, has played in two major leagues for Montreal, Detroit, Boston, Atlanta and the New York Yankees.

Briefs

McGriff works out for Yankees

TAMPA, Fla. — Three days after his release from Tampa Bay, Fred McGriff worked out Wednesday for the New York Yankees, the team that launched his career 23 years ago.

The Devil Rays designated the 40-year-old first baseman for assignment on July 17 after he hit .181 with two homers and seven RBIs in 27 games. Seven homers shined in 2001.

New York could be in the market for another first baseman depending on test results regarding ailing starter Jason Giambi.

Brewers sign LHP Davis to two-year, \$6M extension

MILWAUKEE — The Milwaukee Brewers signed left-handed pitcher Doug Davis to a two-year contract worth up to \$5.95 million.

Davis, who is 9-9 with a 3.99 ERA this season, is making \$450,000 this year after missing arbitration eligibility by a single day last winter.

Wagner has shoulder checked

MIAMI — Ailing Phillies closer Billy Wagner traveled back to Philadelphia on Wednesday to have his sore left shoulder examined by team physician Dr. Michael Cicotti.

Wagner complained of stiffness in his left shoulder, which has kept him sidelined for the past week. He's scheduled to see Cicotti on Thursday.

Competition to surprise teams this year

Rejuvenated Hospital looks to chart progress in Marine Forces Regional

BY DAVE ORNAUER
Stars and Stripes

CAMP FOSTER, Okinawa — After shedding its "loser" label and becoming the darling of the Marine Forces Pacific Regional Softball tournament last summer, what can U.S. Naval Hospital Camp Lester do for an encore?

"We won't sneak up on people [but] we won't be an automatic 'W [win] either,'" said five-time All-Armed Forces player Mel Harris, who is coaching the corpsmen in the Marine Regionals for the second time.

"They'll learn how far they've come starting Monday, when the 2004 Marine Regional tournament gets under way at Field 1, Foster Field Complex.

Starting in 1993, Hospital lost 82 straight games, including two heartbreakers on the second day of the 2003 tournament. It lost 10-9 in eight innings to 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, and 9-8 to 3rd Marine Division/Expeditionary Force, which won after a six-run sixth-inning rally.

"The corpsmen broke through the next day, scoring 11 runs in the sixth inning to rally past Japan's Iwakuni Marine Corps Air Station 17-15. In the second round of the playoffs, Hospital advanced less to Wing 18-6 before falling 19-17 in eight innings against Division 3.

"They want to try to build something positive. It's good for them, it's good for the command and for

the development of the players as people as well as at work," Harris said.

The corpsmen will get a stern test right out of the gate: They'll battle defending champion 3rd Force Service Support Group of Okinawa, which went unbeaten in nine games last year by an average of 8.3 runs.

The respect Hospital earned last year was evident when Harris spoke to 3rd Force pitcher Rich Krause during the Firecracker Shootout tournament three weeks ago.

"He told me, 'You won't come out and surprise anybody this year,'" Harris said. "We know we'll be competitive. Opening against 3rd Force, we'll see right away what we have to do to play on this level and compete."

Only three players — Channing Smith, James Coleman and Mark Herring — return from last year's team for Hospital, one of seven commands that compete in the Marine regional program in softball, soccer and basketball.

Despite the limited number of experienced players, "We'll have a better overall team," Harris said. "We have more athletes."

Coleman agreed. "Fundamentally, skillwise," he said, "we have a better team this year than last year."

They also agreed that the corpsmen will have to work harder against a tournament field with plenty of individual talent.

Krause and speedy Kevin



DAVE ORNAUER/Stars and Stripes

Channing Smith is one of three players returning from last year's U.S. Naval Hospital Camp Lester team that won its first games in 10 years.

Healy help bolster the defending champions. Robert Putney returns for Division Two-time tournament MVP Joe Sutter has transferred and now will help lead Marine Corps Base Hawaii, trying for its first tournament title in three years.

Doubling their difficulties is the nature of hospital duties, in a 24-hour, seven-day-a-week work environment when emergencies

can pop up at a second's notice. Hospital historically has forfeited more games in regional tournament play than any other command simply because of work.

Even if the players have temporary duty orders assigning them to play in the tournament, "If 2:30 p.m. comes around and we have a game at 3 p.m. and we have nothing to do, they might still say they need us here or they might let us

Marine Forces Pacific Regional Softball Tournament

Dates: Aug. 2-6.
Site: Field 1, Camp Foster, Okinawa.

Format: Seven teams, single round-robin and double-elimination play.

Schedule: First round-robin game 3 p.m. Monday. Last round-robin game 9 p.m. Wednesday. First playoff game 11 a.m. Thursday. Championship game 7 p.m. Aug. 6, with second game if necessary at 8:30 p.m. Closing ceremony at 6 p.m. Aug. 7 at Globe & Anchor Club, Camp Foster.

Participating teams: Marine Corps Base Camp S.J. Butler (defending champion), 3rd Force Service Support Group, 1st Marine Aircraft Wing, 3rd Marine Division/Expeditionary Force and U.S. Naval Hospital Camp Lester (Okinawa, Hawaii); Marine Corps Air Station, Japan; Marine Corps Base Hawaii.

Awards: 10-player all-tournament team, MVP, All-Tournament coach, six player selections to All-Marine tryout camp Aug. 16-Sept. 5 at Cherry Point Air Station, N.C. The All-Marine team plays in the All-Armed Forces tournament Sept. 6-11 at Eglin Air Force Base, Fla. Followed by the Amateur Softball Association Class A national tournament Sept. 16-19 at Sanford, Fla.

go," said Coleman, who works in hospital supply.

"I'm surprised Channing made it to as many games as he did last year," Coleman said of Smith, who works in the emergency room.

Still, Coleman and the corpsmen hope to equal or better last year's performance, beginning with a strong statement against 3rd Force.

"Last year, we made a big surprise just by winning two games," Coleman said. "Every year, we get beaten into the ground by those guys [3rd Force]. All I'm thinking about is them."

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Italian police question cyclist over clash with Armstrong

The Associated Press

ROME — An Italian cyclist who says he was "threatened" by six-time Tour de France champion Lance Armstrong during this year's race was questioned by police about the episode, which might be linked to a feud between the riders.

Filippo Simoni was questioned Tuesday in Rome about the July 23 stage, during which he was chased down by Armstrong, a move apparently related to a dispute over Simoni's testimony about drug use in cycling. Col. Stefano Ortolani of the paramilitary Carabinieri NAS anti-doping squad said Wednesday.

Last Friday, when Simoni moved ahead to try for victory on a stage that would not have been affected by the overall standings, Armstrong chased him down and herded him back to the main pack.

On Thursday, Gazzetta dello Sport quoted Simoni after he left police questioning as saying "He prevented me from continuing the breakaway and afterward he threatened me."

Armstrong's agent, Bill Stapleton, had no comment Wednesday, a spokeswoman said.

Simoni, of the Domina Vacanze

Sports briefs

ze squad, has testified against controversial sports doctor Michele Ferrari, with whom Armstrong has ties. Ferrari faces allegations of providing performance enhancers to riders.

Williams sisters struggle

CARLSBAD, Calif. — Top-seeded Serena Williams overcame a blister on her left foot and an unexpected challenge from Jelena Jankovic, but won her second-round match Tuesday in the Acura Classic.

While Serena took more than two hours to beat her unseeded opponent, older sister Venus had even bigger problems and withdrew from her first-round match against Gisela Dulko with a sprained right wrist. Venus sustained the injury last week and was forced to withdraw during the semifinals of the WTA tournament in Carson, Calif.

Serena's problem became noticeable during the fifth game of the third set of her 6-7 (3), 6-3, 6-2 victory. She pulled up lame with her left foot after chasing down a ball.

Wimbledon champion Maria

Sharapova used a solid service game to overpower qualifier Lilia Osterloh 6-3, 6-3. It was Sharapova's first match since her surprisingly easy victory over Serena at Wimbledon on July 3 for her first Grand Slam title.

Federer advances in rainy Masters Canada

TORONTO — Top-seeded Roger Federer beat Morocco's Hicham Arazi 6-3, 7-5 Wednesday to advance to the second round of the \$2.5 million Masters Canada tournament.

Federer won the first set Tuesday night before play was suspended due to rain.

American Vince Spadea beat 19-year-old Canadian Frank Dancevic 6-1, 6-4 in a first-round match at the Rexhall Centre. Dancevic, ranked No. 225, never found his rhythm against the 21st-ranked Spadea.

Second-seeded American Andy Roddick, the defending champion, was scheduled to play qualifier Julien Benneteau on Wednesday night.

Taiwan earns return trip to Little League World Series

SOUTH WILLIAMSPORT, Pa. — Taiwan is back in the Little League World Series, seven years

after pulling out of the tournament because of player eligibility questions.

Shou Tien of Kaohsiung, Taiwan, beat Japan's Sendai Higashi 7-5 Wednesday to win the Asia Region championship and qualify for the Little League World Series.

Saipan from the Northern Mariana Islands beat Indonesia's Jakarta Little League 4-3 to win the Pacific Region title.

In April 1997, Taiwan withdrew from Little League, saying it couldn't guarantee compliance with Little League's eligibility requirements.

Maryland basketball player charged with disorderly conduct

PORTLAND, Maine — A former Mr. Maine Basketball who plays for Maryland has been free on bail following his arrest last weekend on a disorderly conduct charge arising from a disturbance in Portland's Old Port district.

According to a police report, Nik Caner-Medley, 20, was arrested Friday night after a confrontation involving a group of people. "Caner-Medley was there, yelling," said Lt. Vern Malloch, reading from the report. "He took his shirt off and threatened to assault [the complainant]." [Caner-Med-

ley's friends were trying to restrain him. He was intoxicated and made a statement, 'I'm from Maryland and nobody can beat me.'"

"Several other people stopped and said [Caner-Medley] was out of control, but none of those people wanted to give statements."

Caner-Medley will not face underage drinking charges because he cannot be placed in a bar and did not admit to drinking, police said.

Maryland coach Gary Williams had no official comment on the arrest, according to Mark Pratto, an assistant media relations director at Maryland.

Hamilton Jr. gets Cup ride

HICKORY, N.C. — PPI Motorsports has signed Bobby Hamilton Jr. to replace Ricky Craven as driver of the No. 14 Chevrolet in the 2005 NASCAR Nextel Cup series.

Hamilton races full-time in the Busch Series for Team Rust Motorsports and has five career victories. He finished fourth last season and is currently eighth in the Busch standings.

Craven, a veteran of 14 seasons in the Cup series, said last week he would finish the season with PPI but would not return to the team next year. He is currently 32nd in the season points and has not finished better than 16th.

SPORTS



Okafor, Duncan ailments show
U.S. men's team lacks depth
in frontcourt, Page 26

Time to earn his stripes

Up-and-coming Bengals expect QB Palmer to keep team on the rise despite inexperience

BY JOE KAY
The Associated Press

IN the past month alone, Carson Palmer has been on the cover of two national magazines and was featured in one of those made-for-TV quarterback competitions.

Not bad for a guy who has yet to throw a pass in the NFL. Starting this week, the former Heisman Trophy winner from USC gets to earn the raves.

He will open training camp as the Cincinnati Bengals' starting quarterback, vested with the franchise's future.

"I just can't wait," Palmer said. How he fares will be one of the main topics of training camps, which started opening on Tuesday. All 32 teams will be in camp by Sunday.

There are a lot of intriguing questions around the league: Can moody running back Corey Dillon fit in with the Patriots and bring them another Super Bowl? How will Eddie George fare in Dallas? What will the Dolphins do now that Ricky Williams is seeking happiness somewhere else? Put Palmer near the top of the discussion list.

The Bengals morphed into the NFL's up-and-coming team last season, Marvin Lewis' first as

head coach. A lot of it could be traced to Jon Kitna, who won the Year award with numbers comparable to what Tom Brady put up in New England.

Meanwhile, Palmer tried to learn by watching.

"You never quit learning," offensive coordinator Bob Bratkowski said Tuesday. "One year is probably not enough, but it's at that point now where he's going to learn by doing it."

Starting Friday, the Bengals will see if their grand experiment blows up in their faces.

Lewis made up his mind in February that it made no sense to let Palmer sit for another season. He has a much stronger arm and is getting paid a lot more than Kitna — \$14 million in bonuses alone as part of a seven-year deal.

As long as Palmer is on the bench, the arm and the money are wasted.

"Last year, people questioned why Jon Kitna should be the starting quarterback, and he proved he was up to the task," Lewis said Tuesday. "He had a good season — not a great season — kind of like our football team."

"This year, I feel strongly that Carson Palmer will be a better quarterback for us. I think he will allow our offense to do better things."

The Bengals went 8-8 and stayed in contention until the final week of the season behind Kitna, who threw for 3,591 yards and 26 touchdowns in a breakthrough year.

There's a much tougher schedule this year and a major uncertainty at the most important position. No one knows how much the one season on the sideline actually helped Palmer, who expects his share of rookie mistakes.

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"This year, I feel strongly that Carson Palmer will be a better quarterback for us. I think he will allow our offense to do better things."

Marvin Lewis
Bengals coach

Carson Palmer enters Bengals training camp as the starting quarterback despite Jon Kitna taking every snap last season, when Cincinnati just missed the playoffs.

AP photo



Yankees hit four homers to beat Jays despite losing pitcher Hernandez to injury

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Raiders will open training camp without Pro Bowl cornerback Charles Woodson

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Third straight win puts Maddux one from 300 Page 29

